

GraceNotes



A Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Newton, NC
Volume 220, Number 8 August 2017



You are invited to join Grace Lutheran Church, Newton on Sunday, August 27th as we celebrate **Homecoming.**

- ❖ Worship will begin at 10:30 AM
- ❖ Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder will be the Guest Preacher
- ❖ Covered dish picnic following worship.
In addition to the Picnic Pavilion, Fellowship Hall, which is air conditioned, will also be available.

We look forward to your presence with us as we celebrate being the Family of Grace for 220 years.



From the Pastor's Pen.....



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ at Grace Church,

You are invited to please join in the celebration! Amazing things are happening at Grace! Many children and their families are attending VBS at Grace and we were excited that everyone will be studying the Life of Rebecca (youth) and the Family Life of Martin Luther (adults). The Vacation Bible School looks to be an overwhelming success! All are welcome and invited to attend! (July 30-August 3 @ 5:30 PM)

Campfirmation at Lutherock has been completed for 2017 and was an awesome experience by all participants – pastors and campers! Our only camper from Grace this year was Makayla Hall and she did a fantastic job of learning about discipleship, worship, confession, evangelism and the work of the Holy Spirit. Ask her about camp and watch her smile!

When another human comes to new life in Christ, we are ALL made new! We will walk this path with the Hall family – Wanda, Michael and Makayla for the next months, praying, celebrating and welcoming this new life into our lives. I would love to see Grace attract more people than fit in the sanctuary! This new addition to the congregation comes from within – and that is a gift from God. May we also invite others from the community to come and learn about the love of Christ! Whenever another human comes to new life in Christ, we are ALL made new! Come be inspired! Invite! Be welcomed!

At Grace Church, your good ministry has ripple effects! You are changing lives! Karen and I will be taking 29 quilts and 25 Bibles to the NALC Convocation in Nashville this month which were made as the result of the partnership between Grace Lutheran and Point of Grace Lutheran Quilting ministries.

The Stephen Ministry Training Classes are going full speed and the five new Stephen Ministry Trainees will be commissioned on Reformation Sunday after 50 hours of intense training and preparation. These Stephen Ministers will be assigned to persons to serve as a one-to-one helping ministry to those in need.

I am humbled and blessed to serve as your pastor at Grace. Your efforts and willingness to serve are God-sent! Thank you for all you do and continue to do for His Kingdom. May we all increase our contribution of time, talent and treasure to this work!

In His Love,

Pastor Gil Gilbert



WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR AUGUST

- ❖ Communion Assistants - Herb and Libby Travis
- ❖ Ushers - Jimmy Jarrett, Gary Leatherman, Harvey Leatherman, Jack Wilfong
- ❖ Greeter - Helen Leatherman
- ❖ Altar Preparation - Lorene Heavner, Belinda Wilfong
- ❖ Children's Church and Nursery - Pat Dietz
- ❖ Offering Tabulators - Mike Pisko, Alan Shull

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 AUGUST



8/06 - Geraldine Jarrett
8/20 - Kim Parker

8/13 - James & Christine Norman
8/27 - Bobbie Brindle

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 JUNE/JULY 2017

	6/25/17	7/02/17	7/09/17	7/16/17	7/23/17
Learning Hour	30	32	49	40	33
Worship	75	78	100	80	75
General Fund Offerings	1,631.00	5,437.85	2,889.00	1,897.00	1,083.00

General Fund **Offerings, June 2017** = \$ 10,351.06
 General Fund **Expenses, June 2017** = \$ 11,388.00
 Difference = - \$ 1,036.94 (expenses exceeded offerings)

Needed Each Week = \$3,257.94

THE FRED T. FOARD SENIORS will meet at Noon on Wednesday, August 2nd, at Grace. Everyone is invited to these gatherings. (LH)

MEN OF GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST will be held on Saturday, August 12th, at 9:00 AM at the Blue Moon. We invite all Men of Grace to join us for discussion, prayer, and great food.

ACOLYTES ARE NEEDED to serve during the Worship Service. We would love to have more baptized youth and adults volunteer for this important ministry of light (The Order of St. James). Please speak with Joy or indicate your willingness to serve on your Worship Today Form. (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)

A HUMAN TRAFFICKING SEMINAR will be held Saturday, August 12th, from 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM at Plateau United Methodist Church, Scronce Road, Vale. Missionary Kimberly Rae and local speaker Amber Bengé will be the presenters. There is a growing problem of human trafficking locally and these women will offer help and insight into the problem. Please register by calling Plateau UMC at 704-462-1551 on Tuesdays or Thursdays from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM. a breakfast brunch will be provided. Anyone may attend this seminar. (LH)

"LIVING A COMPASSIONATE LIFE" - Henri Nouwen Society is delighted to present "Living a Compassionate Life: Reflections on the Life and Teachings of Henri Nouwen" on **August 18-19** at St. Matthew Catholic Church, Charlotte, located at 8015 Ballantyne Commons Parkway. The Friday presentation on the 18th will be from 7:30 PM until 9:00 PM. The Saturday session (19th) is from 8:30 AM to 3:00 PM. This two-day event will feature Father Ron Rolheiser and other speakers. Call St. Matthew Church Office (704-543-7677) to register. Seating is limited. (PG)

HEARTFELT THANKS from Joe & Lynette Momier for all the prayers, cards, and phone calls after their devastating vehicle accident in Charleston. The prayers are truly felt as they continue to heal. To God be the glory.

CHURCH DIRECTORY UPDATE:

Brian and Jill Matthews - new address: 3449 Wellman Road, Vale, NC 28168

ITEMS FOR THE AUGUST 13TH BULLETIN are needed by noon on Thursday, August 3rd. Kathy will be out of the Church Office August 7th through August 11th to attend the NALC Convocation in Nashville, TN. The bulletin for August 13th will be printed before she leaves. Please plan ahead and get any information to her as soon as possible. (KH)

THE CONGREGATION IS INVITED to come to a "sending off" party for Alyssa McCrary, Herb and Libby Travis' granddaughter. She will be heading off to Belmont Abbey College on August 18th. The party will be held on Saturday, August 12th, from 3:00 PM to 6:00 PM in Fellowship Hall. (HT)

A CLUSTER REFORMATION SERVICE to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation will be held at New Jerusalem Lutheran Church on Reformation Sunday, October 29th. The time will be announced later. This will be a wonderful time to come together with our Lutheran neighbors to worship and celebrate. Rev. Nathan Yoder will be preaching. Watch the bulletin and newsletter for further details. (KH)

THE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER is in need of a 10 hour a week licensed Obstetrical Sonographer. They have been so blessed to have Denise Fannon with them for over a decade. Her family is relocating soon. This person must be a Christian who is deeply committed to the Sanctity of Human Life. Please direct any inquiries about the position to Renee Bentley, Executive Director of the PCC at 828-322-4272 or execdir@pcchickory.com. Thank you for your partnership in ministry and for life. (KH)

SHOEBOX STORIES FROM SAMARITAN'S PURSE

"The shoebox was a reminder that God will provide," said Nadia. Despite her parents' desire to care for their nine children, employers in Ukraine refused to give her father a job because he pastored an underground church.

"I had never received a gift before. I grew up in a family of nine children, and we survived on rice and potatoes," said Nadia's brother Vladimir, who was introduced to dental floss in his shoebox gift. He had never seen dental floss before.

For twins Shanika and Sherika in Jamaica, "the shoebox gifts and The Greatest Gift booklet helped us as new Christians to continue to grow in our faith." When siblings each receive a shoebox gift, the message of God's love is multiplied. This shared experience becomes something they talk about for years to come. (PG)

THE NALC NEWS FOR JULY is available in the Narthex or online at www.thenalc.org.

- + 2017 NALC Convocation to celebrate 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Church leaders from Africa will be featured preachers.
- + Convocation to elect Executive Council, Court of Adjudication.
- + Changes to Bishop election process to be considered by Convocation.
- + Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology.
- + "Moments of Mission" artwork to be available at Convocation.
- + Mission update from the Panzos.
- + "Temples and Priests: Before and after Christ's resurrection" by Pastor Mark Chavez.
- + NALC pastors provide leadership for Call to Love Conference.
- + "Luther on the Christian life" - Message from Bishop Bradosky.
- + Stuff the truck for Disaster Response.
- + Mission Office update
- + Faithwebbing.com update.
- + "Is your congregation stagnant and in decline?"

Welcome to Life-to-Life Discipleship - Jesus' intention for renewal and re-formation" - "Ministry Matters" by Pastor David Wendel.

THE ANNUAL NALC LUTHERAN WEEK will be held in Nashville, TN August 7th through August 11th. Please keep Bishop Bradosky, Pastor Gil & Karen, Pastor Dave & Kathy Hefner, all other leaders, and all those attending in your prayers. The week will consist of an NALC Youth Leaders Symposium, WNALC Annual Gathering, The Braaten-Benne Lectures in Theology, and the NALC Convocation and Mission Festival. It is a great opportunity to learn about the Church and other fellow Christians in the NALC. (KH)

FROM THE EASTERN CATAWBA COOPERATIVE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY:

"Thank you so much for volunteering with us in June. Your church worked a total of 11.5 hours with 6 volunteers during June. As you know, 20% of homes in our community live with food insecurity. Your hard work helped alleviate that problem. We had a great time with you! We look forward to working with you all again! If anyone would like to volunteer with us regularly, please contact Steve McNeely at 828-465-1702 or at s.mcneely@ecccm.org."

The next assigned Grace volunteer date is Tuesday, August 29th. If the 6 that volunteered in June each brought someone with them, we could double the volunteers on the 29th! Hope to see you there. (PG)

LETTER FROM THE NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP HOME:

6/23/2017

Richard E. Macon
Owner
Changing Lives Now, LLC.
P.O. Box 86
Hiddenite NC, 28636

Dear Friends, Pastor, and Congregants of Grace Lutheran Church,

It is very simple, in Mathew chapter 17 and 18; Jesus teaches his disciples a lesson in faith after which he commands a little boy to come stand next to him as he continues his lesson. Jesus then said, "the one that is least among you is the one that is truly great." These are the chapters in the bible that I have modeled our work upon. To serve children are the reason that we as adults exist in my estimation. Thank you for your support in helping us to do just that. Your kind and warm gifts, have been such a blessing to our small yet sincere and dedicated company. The dining room table came just in time for our final inspection, the blankets add a homey feel to our home and will keep our children warm in the winter, and the couch will allow our boys/girls to sit comfortable for years to come. Thank you again for extending your gracious support to these children and our company. We realize that everyone's calling may not be to work directly with our youth however, your prayer support and giving makes you a part of the direct care that we provide for our children daily.

Once again, thank you to all of the members of the wonderful congregation of Grace Lutheran Church for your prayers, gifts, and support.

Sincerely,



Richard E. Macon MA, QP
Owner/Changing Lives Now, LLC.

Changing Lives Now. LLC.
4675 Hickory/Lincolnton Rd.
Newton NC, 28658

BOARD NOTES FOR JULY

Meeting Called to Order and Devotions were given by Carl Beam.

Old Business:

- * Parsonage needs painting. Joe Momier to supply names of painters to Carl Beam for quote.
- * Church Bus: Ricky Bivens took bus to Cloninger Ford. Estimate for repairs needed totaled approximately \$3,600/\$4,500 with new tires. Alan Shull would check on additional prices and report back for possible work to be done.

New Business:

- * Joy Heavner presented maps of properties owned by the congregation.
- * Group Home in process of being approved by the state for occupancy. Received letter of thanks from administrator of the home for gifts of furniture, quilts, food items.
- * Pews in Union Church need to be repaired or replaced. Splinters and exposed nails causing injuries to worshippers.
- * Executive Committee will need to meet with the Girl Scout organization using Fellowship Hall to sign the NALC agreement. NALC policy prohibits any organization from using any NALC church facilities which promotes, condones or approves of non-biblical sexual behavior.

Learning: VBS Planning progressing for July 30-August 3.

Praise/Worship: Hymn Sing October 15; Choir resumes rehearsals on August 9; Countywide Reformation Service will be at New Jerusalem on October 29.

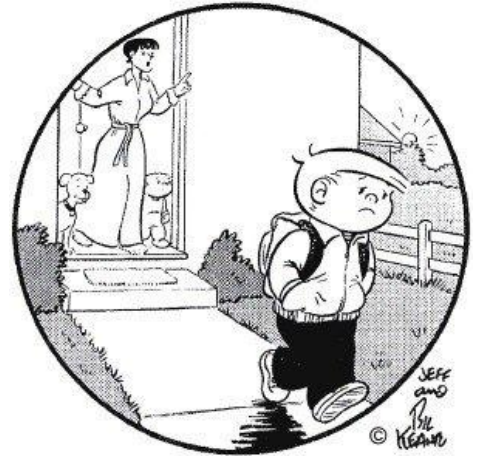
Community Outreach: Mike Pisko reported that a family had been burned out of their home. Suggest the opportunity for Grace congregation to assist once needs are ascertained.

Cemetery: Allen Biggerstaff has made report that the recent Cemetery Day was a great success. Added to the Cemetery Team are: Tim Leatherman, Wayne Powell and Herb Travis.

Next Meeting: Sunday, August 13 @ 4:00, Alan Shull will present the devotions.

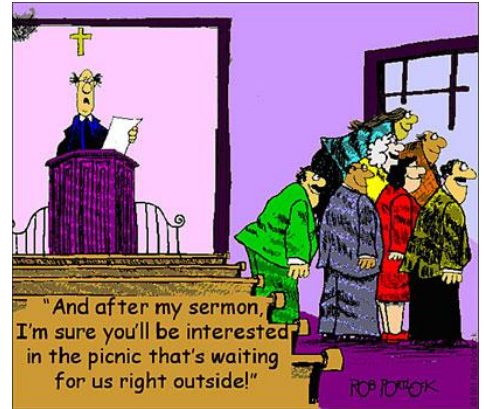
Meeting closed with prayer by Pastor Gilbert

THE FAMILY CIRCUS



"Your day goes the way the corners of your mouth turn. So smile."

from *JoyfulNoiseletter.com*
Reprinted with permission of Bill Keane



Bible Study for all Women coming Saturday, September 9th, from 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM. The study will be lead by Pastor Heidi Punt. Lunch will be served. More details to follow.

EIGHT ESSENTIAL THINGS EVERY CHURCH NEEDS

If you want your church to have the impact of the early church, the New Testament shows us eight essential characteristics every church needs.

1. RELY ON SUPERNATURAL POWER

“Then, what looked like flames or tongues of fire appeared and settled on each of them. And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability” (Acts 2:3-4 NLT).

We don’t just talk about God; we experience him. This is what makes the church different from every other organization on the planet. We are blessed with the Holy Spirit.

Microsoft doesn’t have the Holy Spirit. The United States government doesn’t have the Holy Spirit. The Red Cross doesn’t have the Holy Spirit. No other organization has the power of God in it. God promised his Spirit to help his church.

2. USE EVERYBODY’S LANGUAGE

“And everyone present was filled with the Holy Spirit and began speaking in other languages, as the Holy Spirit gave them this ability” (Acts 2:4 NLT).

This passage isn’t about speaking in tongues. It’s about the Gospel being communicated in real languages. People actually heard the early Christians speak in their own languages – whether that was Farsi, Swahili, German, Greek, or whatever.

God says from the very first day of the church that the Good News is for everyone. It’s not just for Jews. It’s amazing grace for every race. But the power of Acts isn’t just about the language of your country of origin. It’s also about languages spoken only in particular subcultures – like mothers of preschoolers or people into hip-hop or accountants or truck drivers. God says in his church, everyone’s language gets used. Are you helping other people use their “language” to reach people with the Good News?

3. USE EVERYONE’S GIFTS

“Then Peter stepped forward with the eleven other apostles and shouted to the crowd, ‘Listen carefully, all of you, fellow Jews and residents of Jerusalem! Make no mistake about this . . . And I [God speaking through Joel] will cause wonders in the heavens above and signs on the earth below—blood and fire and clouds of smoke . . . But everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved’” (Acts 2:14, 19, 21).

In New Testament times, there weren’t spectators in the church. There were only contributors – 100 percent participation. Not everyone is called to be an ordained pastor, but everyone is called to be part of the priesthood of all believers (Martin Luther) to serve God. If you want Grace Lutheran Church to have the impact of the early church, everyone needs to be involved in the ministry. It should be made clear to everyone that passivity isn’t an option. If there are some who just want sit around and soak up the service of others, they need to be challenged.

4. OFFER LIFE-CHANGING TRUTH

The early church didn’t offer pop psychology, polite moralisms, or nice-sounding inspiration. We must always offer the truth of the Gospel. God’s Word has the power to change lives. No other message changes lives like the Good News. No other message changes a guy from a wife-abuser to being a loving, responsible husband. It’s when the truth of God’s Word gets into us that we change.

In Acts 2, Peter gives the very first Christian sermon, quoting the Old Testament book of Joel. Peter shares the Gospel in this message. Acts 2 says that the early church devoted itself to the

“apostles’ teaching” – the Bible. God’s Word gave the early church power (For more about helping your church dig into God’s Word, check out the weekly Bible study at Grace called “Connections”, every Thursday at 10:30 am).

5. PROVIDE LOVING SUPPORT

“All the believers devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to fellowship, and to sharing in meals (including the Lord’s Supper), and to prayer” (Acts 2:42 NLT).

The first church loved and cared for one another. The church isn’t a business. It’s not an organization. It’s not a social club. It’s the Body of Christ. For the church to experience the power of the early church, we’ve got to become the family of Christ that they were. And do not make the mistake of expecting the pastor to do it all. He/she is only human. He/she needs the help of every person in the congregation to help fulfill the mission God has given him/her to do.

6. ENJOY JOYFUL WORSHIP

“They worshiped together at the Temple each day, met in homes for the Lord’s Supper, and shared their meals with great joy and generosity” (Acts 2:46 NLT).

When the early Church gathered, they celebrated, “praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.” We must understand and teach that worship is a celebration. It’s a festival, not a funeral. It’s the party for the Kingdom of God.

When worship is joyful, people want to be there because people are looking for joy. Do you think if our church was full of glad hearts, joyful words, hopeful lives, and encouragement we’d attract other unbelievers? Sure we would.

7. MAKE GENEROUS SACRIFICES

“And all the believers met together in one place and shared everything they had. They sold their property and possessions and shared the money with those in need” (Acts 2:44-45 NLT).

The Bible teaches us to make generous sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel. The Christians during the Roman Empire were the most generous people in the empire. In fact, they were famous for their generosity. They literally shared everything – with one another and the poor. The Bible says the early church “shared everything they had” (Acts 2:44 NLT).

That’s a church worth dying for – which is exactly what first-century Christians did. They chose to die with gladiators and lions in the Coliseum rather than renounce their faith and their brothers and sisters in God’s family.

8. CREATE EXPONENTIAL GROWTH

“ . . . All the while praising God and enjoying the goodwill of all the people. And each day the Lord added to their fellowship those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47 NLT).

When our church demonstrates these characteristics of the early church, growth is automatic. People may have looked at the first Christians as weird, but they liked what they were doing. They saw their love for one another, the miracles that took place in their midst, and the joy that was in their lives, and they wanted what the Christians had.

THE INAUGURATION OF DR. FREDERICK WHITT as 12th president of Lenoir-Rhyne University, Hickory, will take place on Friday, **September 8**, at 10:00 a.m. at P.E. Monroe Auditorium on LR’s campus. Attendance is by invitation only.



WHY READING IS IMPORTANT FOR THE CHRISTIAN

In the secular world, it is universally understood that in order to succeed in life, one must read. Entrepreneurs constantly talk about how those at the top of the financial ladder read at least one book a week. The more wisdom gleaned from others, the better one leads and succeeds.

The same is true when it comes to having spiritual influence and impact as a follower of Jesus Christ. Granted, most of the early Christians couldn't read. However, the ancients had enormous capacities to retain information. That's how the words of Jesus and the apostles were accurately recorded decades after they were originally uttered. Paul of Tarsus, one of the most influential Christians who ever lived, not only could read, but he was well versed in the writings of others, even quoting them.

Fact: I've never met a person who was successful in the Lord's work who wasn't an avid reader. Here are five reasons why reading books will make you a more effective and influential Jesus-follower:

1. The church has been with us for 2,000 years. God hasn't just started shedding light on His Word in our generation. There is a gold mine of insight found in books written by His servants over thousands of years. So we can learn enormously from their experience, insight, and knowledge.

2. The Lord has put teachers in His church from the beginning up until now. So it's both foolish and unscriptural to think that any of us can tap into all the riches of Christ by ourselves. Consequently, the idea that says, "all I need to read is my Bible" is both sophomoric, and well, unbiblical.

3. Reading makes you a better thinker. It sharpens your mind, cuts new grooves in your brain, and opens you up to new ideas, concepts, and perspectives. Not to mention it strengthens and broadens your vocabulary, making you a better communicator.

4. Reading helps you understand the world better, including what motivates people. And a book about the Bible or the ancient world can throw tremendous light on your understanding of Scripture.

5. Reading helps us to know the Lord better. I have in mind books written specifically by those who are (and were) ahead of us in the spiritual journey.

All of these reasons are why I read books and why I write them for others.

Keep in mind that the specific kinds of books one reads is a vital piece of the puzzle. A.W. Tozer bemoaned the fact that the popular books of his day were fluff. He wrote,

"I was browsing a used bookstore recently, and I must confess I have never bought a book because it was popular. Sometimes the popular book is the most shallow, at least in my experience ... I blush today to think about the religious author that is now being handed out to our poor kids. I pray daily that the spirit of seriousness might fall upon the church once again to such an extent that we will have an insatiable appetite for not only the deep things of God, but for God Himself. When a person nourishes his soul on the high and lofty thoughts of God, he loses his appetite for the watered-down modern-day religion."

If Tozer were living now, he'd be stunned to discover that the problem he described has been raised to the 50th power. Some of the best Christian writers are listed here: R.C. Sproul, A.W. Tozer, Bill Easum, Leonard Sweet, Billy Graham, Martin Luther, Eric Metaxas, Max Lucado, Michael Breen, Walt Kallestad, Chuck Swindoll, George Barna, Kennon Callahan, Kenneth Haugk, Grab a good Christian book by any of these authors and READ!

CONGREGATIONS ARE DYING ?

I just received the sad new last week of another church closing its doors after many, many years of good ministry. This church had unbelievable potential. Indeed, it had its own “glory days,” but only for a season. But, 10 years ago, few would have predicted this church’s closure. Today, it is but another statistic in the ecclesiastical graveyard. I know. We don’t compromise doctrine. I know. We must never say we will change God’s Word. But many of our congregations must change. They must change or they will die.

I call these churches “the urgent church.” Time is of the essence. If changes do not happen soon, very soon, these churches will die. The pace of congregational death is accelerating. What, then, are some of the key changes churches must make? Allow me to give you a fair warning. None of them are easy. Indeed, they are only possible in God’s power. Here are nine of them:

1. We must stop bemoaning the death of cultural Christianity. Such whining does us no good. Easy growth is simply not a reality for many churches. People no longer come to a church because they believe they must do so to be culturally accepted. The next time a church member says, “They know where we are; they can come here if they want to,” rebuke him/her. Great Commission Christianity is about going; it’s not “y’all come.”

2. We must cease seeing the church as a place of comfort and stability in the midst of rapid change. Certainly, God’s truth is unchanging. So we find comfort and stability in that reality. But don’t look to your church not to change methods, approaches, and human-made traditions. Indeed, we must learn to be uncomfortable in the world if we are to make a difference. “We’ve never done it that way before,” is a death declaration.

3. We must abandon the entitlement mentality. Your church is not a country club where you pay dues to get your perks and privileges. It is a gospel outpost where you are to put yourself last. Don’t seek to get your way with the music, temperature, and length of sermons. Here is a simple guideline: Be willing to die for the sake of the gospel. That’s the opposite of the entitlement mentality.

4. We must start doing. Most of us like the idea of evangelism more than we like doing evangelism. Try a simple prayer and ask God to give you gospel opportunities. You may be surprised how He will use you.

5. We must stop using biblical words in unbiblical ways. “Discipleship” does not mean caretaking. “Fellowship” does not mean entertainment.

6. We must stop focusing on minors as being the future of the church. They are the present. Satan must delight when a church spends six months wrangling over a bylaw change. That’s six months of gospel negligence.

7. We must stop bowing down to the antagonist. This tragedy is related to the entitlement mentality. If we don’t get our way, we will go after the pastor, the staff member, or the church member who has a different perspective than our own. We will even go after their families. Don’t let bullies and perpetual critics control the church. If they want to leave, let them and then respect their decision. God may want them somewhere else!

8. We must stop wasting time in unproductive meetings, committees, and business sessions. Wouldn’t it be nice if every church member could only ask one question or make one comment in a meeting for every time he or she has shared his or her faith the past week?

9. We must become houses of prayer. Stated simply, we are doing too much in our own power. We are really busy, but we are not doing the business of God.

It is estimated that around 200 churches will close this week, maybe more. The pace will accelerate unless our congregations make some dramatic changes. The need is urgent. Hear me well, church leaders and church members. For many of your churches the choice is simple: change or die. Time is running out. Please, for the sake of the gospel, forsake yourself and make the changes in God’s power.

Grace Notes

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church N.A.L.C.
4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway
Newton, NC 28658

A TRIP TO THE BILLY GRAHAM LIBRARY is planned for Friday, August 25th. The Church Bus will leave the church parking lot at 10:30 AM. We will arrive at the Billy Graham Library in time for lunch at 11:45 AM. After lunch we will take the tour of the facility and then allow time to "explore" on your own. We will arrive back at the church around 4:00 PM. Everyone is welcome to join in the fun. Please mark on your Worship Today Form or contact the Church Office if you plan to attend so we can give an accurate count to the Library for lunch. (A few copies of their menu are in the Narthex.

THE CAROLINAS LUTHERAN WOMEN will hold their Annual Convocation on Saturday, September 30th, at Saint Peter's Lutheran Church in Lexington, SC. This year's theme is "Living as 'SON'Flowers". There is an \$8.00 registration fee which includes lunch. Registration begins @ 9:30 AM and the Convocation begins at 10:00 AM. All are welcome to attend. Registration forms are available in the Church Office or online at www.carolinaslutheranwomen.org. Registration is due by September 18th. All are welcome to attend this event.