

GraceNotes



A Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Newton, NC
Volume 220, Number 9 September 2017



SUNDAY, September 10, 2017

9:00 AM RALLY Day BREAKFAST

9:30 AM LEARNING HOUR FOR ALL AGES

10:30 AM WORSHIP AND OPERATION

CHRISTMAS CHILD KICKOFF

Hope to see YOU there!

READING ARK at Grace
ON SUNDAY, September 17th.
FILLED WITH BOOKS FOR THE CHILDREN.



Saturday, September 9th

11:00 AM

"Power, Purpose, and Poise: A Biblical perspective of being a woman in the world, in the family, and in the church."

Led by Pastor Heidi Punt



From the Pastor's Pen.....



Dear Brothers and Sisters at Grace Church,

As I write this letter to you, there is much excitement and preparation for the eclipse that will occur today (August 21st). Karen and I drove to Charlotte this past Saturday to pick up our grandson and the traffic heading to South Carolina on I-85 and I-77 was unreal - bumper to bumper traffic traveling 20-25 miles an hour. I mentioned to Karen how eerie the excitement is over an eclipse and people rushing to find a hotel room and preparing to watch the eclipse on Monday (21st). I recalled reading about the worship of the sun-god in Egypt and how they believed that eclipses were omens of bad things, as well as good things happening in their world. I guess it just depended on who the astronomer was at the time who would determine if it was good or bad! The huge exodus to Greenville and Columbia for this event is a reminder of Egyptian sun worship.

It all makes us wonder how many people in this world are excited about the return of God's Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. He said he will be coming back and I fully believe that one day, He will. How many of us live like He will return at any moment? Shouldn't we be living like that every day? Shouldn't we be excited and preparing for His return by flocking to our churches on Sundays and causing traffic jams around our church parking lots? Shouldn't the traffic in our towns and cities on Sunday mornings be similar to that of our interstates as masses drive to see an eclipse?

When I think of all that is happening at Grace Church just in the month of September, I am amazed at how we take so much for granted. He has blessed us with events like Homecoming and Rally Day; going to the Billy Graham Library in Charlotte, great learning classes and meaningful worship every Sunday, to be with wonderful brothers and sisters in Christ, and the list goes on and on.

I pray that each of us will come to Grace every Sunday in great expectation of Jesus' presence. How would you act if you knew Jesus was going to show up? This is an important question for us to ponder as we move forward in faith. I hope you will think about it, talk about it, discuss it in your classes, and pray about it. Pray that Jesus will show himself in ways we never imagined. I will be looking for Him. I hope you will too!

In Him,

Pastor Gil Gilbert

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR SEPTEMBER

- ❖ Communion Assistants - Don & Nicky Jarrett
- ❖ Ushers - Jacob Jarrett, Johnny Moss, Justin Whalen
- ❖ Greeter - Katie Whalen
- ❖ Altar Preparation - Debra Hefner, Sharon Whalen
- ❖ Children's Church and Nursery - Ricky & Cindy Bivens
- ❖ Offering Tabulators - Tim Eckard, 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 SEPTEMBER



9/03 - OPEN
9/17 - OPEN

9/10 - Kim Parker
9/24 - 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 JULY/AUGUST 2017

	7/30/17	8/06/17	8/13/17	8/20/17
Learning Hour	47	33	38	40
Worship	82	68	105	86
General Fund Offerings	1,662.00	5,531.00	2,092.13	2,062.90

General Fund **Offerings, July 2017** = \$ 13,012.80
 General Fund **Expenses, July 2017** = \$ 12,903.47
 Difference = + \$ 109.33 (offerings exceeded expenses)

Needed Each Week = \$3,257.94

THE FRED T. FOARD SENIORS will meet at Noon on Friday, September 1st, at Baker's Mountain for a picnic. Please note the change of meeting day. Everyone is invited to these gatherings. (LH)

MEN OF GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST will be held on Saturday, September 9th at 9:00 AM at The Hen & Egg, 204 North College Avenue, Newton. *Please note the change of venue.* We invite all Men of Grace to join us for discussion, prayer, and great food.

FROM RICKY BIVENS: I appreciate all the love, prayers, and cards that I received during my recent surgery and recovery. I could feel my knee getting stronger with every prayer. I am so blessed to be part of this Grace Family. Also, I could not have gotten through all this without my loving and caring wife, Cindy. (RB)

THANK YOU for your generosity in sharing your gardens with us this summer. We have enjoyed many meals with fresh tomatoes, bell peppers, corn on the cob, squash, zucchini, cucumbers, onions, and so much more. Our hearts overflowed because of your generosity. Thank you for thinking of us! -Pastor Gil and Karen

THANKS to Tricia Panek for giving of her time to create another beautiful banner. (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)

ITEMS FOR THE SEPTEMBER 10TH BULLETIN are needed by noon on Thursday, August 31st. Kathy will be out of the Church Office September 4th through September 8th for a family vacation. The bulletin for September 10th will be printed before she leaves. Please plan ahead and get any information to her as soon as possible. (KH)

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOX KICKOFF will be held on Rally Day Sunday, September 10th. We will have a special guest here that day. Amy Grant, from Samaritan's Purse (not the Christian music artist), will speak to the congregation and have supplies and information for us. The empty shoeboxes will be available for you to pick up. Amy's talk should inspire all of us to find a way to reach out to the children around the world and bless them with God's love through us.

THE READING ARK is coming to Grace. There is an Ark (almost like Noah's) that goes to parks and schools and is even in parades that is stocked full of children's books...just for kids! We had originally planned for the Ark to come to Grace on Rally Day, but because of a scheduling conflict, the Ark could not make it on that day. But the following Sunday, September 17th, the Reading Ark will be at Grace during the Learning Hour for all children to visit and pick out a book to take home. We thank the good folks at Point of Grace Lutheran Church in Cornelius for being willing to come to Grace to share this wonderful ministry with the youth. Kids, bring your friends and come see the Ark and get a book! (PG)

VOLUNTEER DAY AT ECCCM is fast approaching. ECCCM has re-designed their volunteer calendar for all area congregations. Each congregation is assigned a specific date to come to ECCCM and help with the food pantry, sorting clothing, and whatever needs to be done. The next date for Grace to serve is *Tuesday, August 29th*. If the 6 that volunteered in May each brought someone with them, we could double the volunteers on the 29th! Hope to see you there. Their hours of operation are 8:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Volunteer opportunities include bagging food for distribution, stocking shelves, filling client orders at the drive-through door, and sorting donations. The facility is located at 245 East North Street, Newton. Please take a few hours and help out and volunteer in this important ministry. (KH)

A WOMEN'S EVENT will be held at Grace on Saturday, September 9th. This event will include a Bible Study lead by Pastor Heidi Punt. The study is titled "Power, Purpose, and Poise: A Biblical perspective of being a woman in the world, in the family, and in the church." Pastor Heidi is currently serving as Pastor at Christ United Lutheran Church, Granite Falls. She is a dynamic and spirit filled speaker. If you have never heard her, ask Lynette Momier about her. The event will be from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM in Fellowship Hall and will include lunch. It will be a fabulous time of learning and fellowship. Mark your calendars now and invite your friends to join us. Registration forms are available in the Sunday bulletins, in the Narthex, and in the Church Office. Please complete a registration form for each person attending so we can get an accurate count for lunch. Information on Pastor Heidi is on the back of the registration form. You won't want to miss this event! Don't forget to bring your Bible!

ADDRESSES FOR STUDENTS that are away at college are needed in the Church Office so we can keep them informed. Email addresses would also be appreciated. Let us know if they would prefer us to "snail" mail or email the newsletter. (KH)

THE CATAWBA COUNTY COUNCIL ON AGING will have several special programs in September - Smart Driver Course for Seniors, a series of sessions on the subject of Alzheimer's, as well as information on the R U Okay program co-ordinated by the Catawba County Sheriff's Department. For specific information contact the Council on Aging at 828-328-2269. (JH)

HELP REQUESTED FOR FAMILY that was burned out of their home. Debi Pisko has been in touch with Brittany Easton whose family has been displaced by the fire. Brittany and her family have been helped by many but are still in need of some items. You can bring the requested items to Grace and Debi and Mike will see that Brittany receives them. She has requested clothes for baby boy - 6 months, clothes for boy - size 7, clothes for girl - size 7, deep pots - not fry pans, plastic cups, silverware, kitchen utensils, plastic food storage containers, and gift cards for kitchen items and clothes. (DP)

IT IS TIME to collect the favorite hymns of the Congregation for the Annual Hymn Sing. Place names of hymns or hymn numbers and book on your Worship Today Form. The Annual Hymn Sing will be held Sunday, October 15th. (JH)

CHURCH BUS UPDATE: I want to commend the Leadership Ministry Board for working together to get the needed repairs to the bus done, and at a much reduced cost. Special thanks to Alan Shull, Herb Travis, Doug Jarrett, and Jimmy Jarrett. Great things can be accomplished by holding hands, praying, trusting in God, and just working together. It takes all of us in the Grace Church Family pulling together. - Ricky Bivens

BOARD NOMINEES are being accepted. In early November, the Grace Congregation will hold its Annual Congregation Meeting as prescribed by the Constitution. Elections will be held to fill the seats of those coming off the Board. If you would like to serve, or if you would like to nominate a fellow member, please submit the name to Tim Eckard, Board President, so their name can appear on the ballot. Make sure to get the permission of the person you are nominating to place their name in nomination. The Executive Committee will also be contacting all nominees prior to the Annual Meeting.

A CATAWBA CLUSTER REFORMATION SERVICE to celebrate the 500th Anniversary of the Reformation will be held at New Jerusalem Lutheran Church on Reformation Sunday, October 29th, at 4:00 PM. There will be a brass ensemble and a combined choir of all the churches in the Catawba Cluster, which consists of 17 congregations. This will be a wonderful time to come together with our Lutheran neighbors to worship and celebrate. Rev. Dr. Nathan Yoder will be preaching.

OKTOBERFEST IS COMING! Anyone interested in going to Pineville to the Waldhorn Restaurant for the Oktoberfest are asked to indicate your desire by calling the Church Office or writing the word "Oktoberfest" on your Worship Today Form on Sunday. If enough folks sign up, we will take the Church Bus. This is one of the largest Oktoberfest celebrations in the area with the Fest being held in a giant circus tent, great German food, a German UMM-PAH band, and lots of fun and fellowship.

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. 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. (KH)

FROM THE PREGNANCY CARE CENTER: The Post Abortion Recovery Bible Study, *Forgiven and Set Free*, will begin on Thursday, September 14th, from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at the Pregnancy Care Center. Please pray for the ladies seeking healing and for the leaders for James 1:5 wisdom as they share hope and the love of Christ. If you or someone you know would benefit from this study, please call the center at 828-322-4272 for information. - Janet Shores RN, Assistant Director

ASK MORTIMER, THE CHURCH MOUSE!



This is a new article which will appear in the coming issues of Grace Notes each month. Feel free to ask Mortimer, the Church Mouse, any question about the church, theology or why we do the things we do in worship. Maybe his answer to your inquiry will appear in the next newsletter.

Question: Morty, why are the doors to the church painted red?

Mortimer's Answer: The doors are painted red as a symbol of the blood of Christ that he shed on the cross for us. They also signify the Body of Christ, that every time we enter the sanctuary through those red doors (His blood) we are reminded of Jesus' sacrifice and that we are entering into His Body/His Kingdom.

MEN'S PRAYER BREAKFAST IS MOVING

The Men of Grace meet on the Second Saturday of each month at 9:00 AM for breakfast, prayer and fellowship. Beginning in September (9th), The Men of Grace will move to The Hen and Egg Restaurant which is located at 204 North College Avenue (one block over from Blue Moon) in downtown Newton. The former owner of the Blue Moon is the new owner of the Hen and Egg and they only serve breakfast and lunch. The Blue Moon can no longer accommodate the men's group upstairs where we have privacy and have been meeting for almost three years. We will plan to meet at The Hen and Egg in September and if it meets the group's approval, we will plan to meet there each month. Hope to see you there!

BOARD NOTES FOR AUGUST

Devotions were given by Alan Shull. Holy Communion was celebrated by all present.

Old Business:

- ❖ Update on painting the trim on the parsonage was given by Carl Beam.
- ❖ Church Bus has been repaired and has new tires. Thanks to Alan Shull for his contributions.

New Business:

- ❖ Office equipment copiers need updating. Rec'd. a quote from present copier firm for new copier and maintenance agreement less expensive than present upkeep. Motion made and passed.
- ❖ Pastor reported on recent NALC Convocation in Nashville. 40 quilts, 5 school kits, 6 cleaning buckets, 3 cases of school supplies, and 4 cases of canned goods were given by Grace/Point of Grace.
- ❖ Homecoming is August 27 and Rally Day is September 10.

Property: A/C in Fellowship Hall has been repaired and is running.

Outreach:

- ❖ Motion to give couple burned out of their home a \$300 gift card from Wal-Mart. Passed.
- ❖ Mike Pisko visited Group Home and made introduction.

Witness: Scout group using Fellowship Hall will meet with Pastor Gil and Tim Eckard for new agreement to be signed relating to requirements of NALC.

Cemetery: Lots of attention still needed for cemetery. Lime, fertilizer needed this fall.

Finance: Proposals needed from every team for building the spending plan for 2018.

Meeting ended with prayer.

Next Meeting: September 10 at 4:00 p.m.

THE RIGHT TRACK

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. — MATTHEW 6:33 NIV

Q. What kind of man was Boaz before he married?

A. Ruthless

Q. What do they call pastors in Germany?

A. German Shepherds.

Q. Who was the greatest financier in the Bible?

A. Noah. He was floating his stock while everyone else was in liquidation.

Q. What was the greatest female financier in the Bible?

A. Pharaoh's daughter. She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little prophet.

CONVOCATION

The gathering of over 700 pastors, delegates and international guests at the Music City Sheraton in Nashville was a great event based on the theme of "Holding Fast...Being Re-Formed". The week began with the Braaten-Benne Theological Lectures featuring 4 fantastic speakers including Dr. Paul Hinlicky and Dr. David Yeago.

The NALC Convocation was called to order on Wednesday and began with worship and a meaningful address by Bishop John Bradosky. The Bishop emphasized what the church is called to be and do by Christ. "Go into all the world making disciples of all nations and teaching them all that I have taught you." We all know very well those words, but are we serious about doing what Jesus commands us? Bradosky continued to stress that "our congregations need to take an inventory of what we do and if it does not center on making disciples, those things we should not be doing. We are to focus on Jesus' directive! So much of what we do in the church is self-serving and does not have anything to do with making disciples." Bishop Bradosky had prepared a Bible study which was done as the entire Convocation broke into smaller District groups to discuss and reflect upon. Much of the material in the study will be presented at Grace on Reformation Sunday in a message by Pastor Gilbert.

A group of us went into downtown Nashville on our free night. We saw the 2 blocks of Broadway Avenue filled with honky-tonks and young guitarists and singers performing their best in the hopes they would be discovered by a recording talent agent. We saw the old Ryman Auditorium just off Broadway and ate supper at the world-famous Rippy's Ribs (I admit they were the best ribs I had ever eaten).

We heard wonderful keynotes by Dr. James Nestingen and Dr. Nathan Yoder. Dr. Nestingen, who has a way of speaking the truth in love while keeping us in stitches with his Norwegian-Lutheran humor, was excellent. Dr. Yoder (Carolinas' Mission District Dean) impressed upon us the importance of being called by the Holy Spirit and our daily walk. The worship for the day featured the Bishop of the Ethiopian Evangelical Church, Rev. Yonas Yigezu who presented a wonderful message about the church in his nation that continually fights Satan with opposing groups who (like ISIS) destroy their churches and kill innocent men, women and children. But grace has abounded as the 7 thugs responsible for burning down several churches were caught and 3 of them have joined one of the churches they were responsible for destroying, thanks to the love and witness of the members there. The Church welcomed over a million members just last year and continues to grow by the power of the Holy Spirit. Also introduced to the Convocation was Rev. Dr. Frederick Onael Shoo, Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania.

Other guests speakers included Rev. Dr. Jared Wicks of the Roman Catholic Church who made a presentation on Luther and Catholicism. Dr. Wicks had been studying Luther and the Reformation since 1977.

Pastor and Karen Gilbert thank the Grace congregation for their support as they attended this event. It was inspiring, heart-warming and exciting to see how the NALC continues to grow (over 400 congregations) and spending time with other pastors and delegates.

DO YOU HAVE CONNECTIONS?

Do you know about "Connections"? It is a Bible study that meets every Thursday morning at 10:30 AM downstairs at Grace to study God's Word. The format is very informal and the study is in-depth and based on the lessons for the upcoming Sunday. So it is very easy. The important part is that you have a connection with God's Word which you can recall during the week. It all comes together with the Sunday message. What a way to study God's Word and make it applicable to your life. Hope to see you on an upcoming Thursday morning.

WHY ISN'T THE LEARNING HOUR (SCS) MORE SUCCESSFUL?

I've been thinking lately about my great grandfather, my mother's grandfather — who was a younger son in a large family in a German immigrant community — who grew up on a farm in New Hanover County (Shallotte, NC near Wilmington NC) in the years prior to the twentieth century. He and his family were members of a Lutheran Church in the city of Wilmington where my mother and her brother were both baptized and confirmed. The church was some 20 to 30 miles from their farm, and I think it was likely they made significant efforts to get to town every Sunday for services by horse and buggy. But I never heard my grandparents, of deep faith and sturdy piety, talk about Sunday School.

What they talked about was how, when they were growing up, at the family table every evening before they would begin to eat, they would have one of the children read a chapter from the Bible, (in German because they didn't speak much English at home), and then would add a few comments of interpretation and application. My grandparents talked about how their parents taught them to read by reading Bible stories with them, and about how in the evening — no radio or television then, of course — they would gather around the piano to sing together: mostly hymns — hymns they would still sing for us with great gusto by heart in his rich baritone fifty and sixty years later.

The point is that whatever Sunday School or Christian Education "program" experiences our grandparents would have had at Church, that would have been icing on the cake — the larger congregation and community reinforcing and affirming the basic foundation of formation for Christian life that was happening every day at home. Which is, I'm pretty sure, more or less how the Christian community has done this work century after century.

The problem with that model of Sunday School, is that Sunday School just can't do what we seem to be asking it to do. It's not that we're spending too much time and energy with our kids, but that we (the church) are not spending nearly enough time with their parents. The problem is not that we spend too much time designing or selecting appropriate curriculum and then training our teachers to use that curriculum successfully on Sunday mornings, but that we're not spending nearly enough time inspiring and equipping and training parents for their critical role as teachers and spiritual leaders in their own families, and then providing them with tools to undertake that ministry in a meaningful way. This was the reformation model that Martin Luther had in mind when he wrote the Catechism. Parents were to teach their children the Small Catechism, but only after the church had instructed the parents in the Large Catechism.

One of the saddest things in the church today is seen Sunday after Sunday when parents drive up to the doors of the church and let their children out to go to Learning Hour classes and then drive away. This is not only sad, it is a direct violation of the baptismal covenant and not a good example for our children. The same can be said of anything that takes us away from learning about the scriptures and Jesus and being in worship. Rally Day is about rallying around the education of each and every member. None of us are too old! And as I was recently reminded recently by grandparents of a little tot, the child opens his book (Bible) and "preaches" to his family every night. Hence, none of us are too young!



GOURMET HOT DOG FUNDRAISER will be held by The Corner Table Soup Kitchen on Saturday, October 7th, from 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM. They will open their facility as a restaurant to those attending the Folk Art Festival in downtown Newton. For more information call 828-464-0355 or go to their website www.thecornertable.org.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2017

Thank you everyone who helped and participated in VBS. It was a wonderful success. We had a low attendance of 61 and a high of 76.

Our wonderful meals were served by Lynette Momier, Dan Panek, Jo Frye, and Cindy Bivens. Lots of hard work went into getting all of the meals ready and served to all of us. Thanks! Joy Heavner was our music director. The children learned a lot. Stormi Shull was our Storyteller. No one can tell a story like Stormi. If you haven't heard about the stories from the children or heard them first hand, you need to come and hear them next year at VBS. Tricia Panek and Pat Dietz were our craft leaders. Ask about the necklaces. They were very meaningful. This year we had a very special project. Sharon Whalen and Justin Whalen lead our gardening project. The kids cleaned out flower beds, spread mulch, and planted different plants in the front of the church. While some were working on the garden, others would be painting friendship rocks. Look around and see if you can find any of them. We started the week by making our tie-dyed shirts. If you have missed any of this, remember we will be having VBS again next year. Other volunteers were Frankie Crouse, Shelia Drum, Jackie Jarrett, Aeron Leonard, Jennifer Leonard, Jodi Martin, Jill Matthews, Jane Moss, Stephanie Russell, Shelly Scronce, Susan Setzer, Alan Shull, Sarah Shumate, and Libby Travis. Special thanks to Karen Gilbert for helping the kids with their rocks and the gardening. It takes all of us to make VBS a success.

Also we thank all the businesses that donated items to VBS:

- Texas Roadhouse - Salad and rolls on Thursday. Perfect attendance certificates and book marks.
- McDonalds - Napkins
- Food Lion - Gift card and special pricing on pizzas
- Lowes Food - Gift card and special pricing on chicken tenders and potato wedges
- O'Charley's - Apple pies
- Bob Evans - Banana nut bread
- Publix Grocery Store - Gift card

Thanks also to all who donated to our gardening project. Just look at how wonderful the front of the church looks.

The food collection for Safe Harbor was great. The older youth made meals for the group and took the rest of the food to the shelter. Thanks to all who gave.

Thank you ALL again. - Nancy Leonard

THANKS FROM RICKY BIVENS: A great big hug.... and thanks to all those involved in this year's VBS. Again, Nancy Leonard was able to put it together, along with her great staff of workers, to have a very successful event for our children. Honorable mention to Sharon and Justin Whalen for taking on the service project. I am sorry that I was unable to take an active part in this year's VBS. These types of church activities are needed for our children. It is our responsibility to teach them, otherwise what kind of future will the world have.





Grace Notes

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