

GraceNotes



A Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Newton, NC
Volume 223, Number 5 **MAY 2020**

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR....As we continue to endure this pandemic of the Coronavirus-19, it is important to remember the promises made to us in scripture about getting through such things. "Do not be afraid. I am with you always...neither death nor life, nor things present, nor things to come shall be able to separate us from the love of Christ Jesus our Lord...and with a word, he healed all who were sick...Fear not, for I am with you...Do not fear, only believe....God gave us a spirit, not of fear, but of power and love and self-control...and of course, the scripture from 1 Thess. 5:16 – Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Yes, these are challenging times never experienced by our generation. But we can be sure that He is in control and will never leave us. So have faith. We will get through this together. God Love You! -- Pastor Gil

WORSHIP WILL RESUME AT GRACE - The problem is, we just don't know when! Some experts are telling us this pandemic will last for years. Others say it will be over in a few weeks. They may be talking about two different things and we must be careful how we assimilate what we hear. Yes, the virus will probably be hanging around, like the flu, for years. It will have its own season. The immediate forecast to return to a new normal, allowing us to leave our homes, to go to work, eat at restaurants, go to grocery stores, etc. will happen gradually in the coming months.

So when can we return to worship? We had originally planned to return to worship at Grace on May 3. But the NC Governor moved the order to stay sheltered in our homes to May 8. That moved the entire schedule of the three phases set by the authorities forward on the calendar. We must remain in Phase One for 14 days before we move to Phase 2. Phase 2 includes when congregations can return to their churches for worship. We don't yet know if that means we can have meetings or extra-faith-based ministries of the church. We are waiting for that clarification. That means 2 weeks from May 8 is May 22. If the cases of the virus do not increase, then we may be able to return to worship on May 24. Pray for that to be so.

STAYING CONNECTED TO GRACE. We are attempting to have a short phone tree message for you almost every day and periodic emails celebrating the season of Easter so you don't feel too isolated from Grace. The Facebook Livestreaming worship and homilies on Sunday mornings have been very beneficial. Over the past 3 weeks, over 700 people have watched the Livestream Facebook Sunday morning messages from Grace (198 on 4/12; 208 on 4/19; 347 on 4/26). We appreciate your positive comments commending the messages and being able to connect with Grace through Facebook.

The Pastors who are teaching the **Confirmation Classes** met this week and have put in place a plan to complete the confirmation year with Vicar Taylor. We hope to have all Confirmands use their computers to meet with Vicar periodically via ZOOM or FaceTime. She is working on a schedule as you read this newsletter. You will hear about this soon.

As far as **Summer Campfirmation**, the Cluster Pastors met last week for a meeting using ZOOM. It was the decision to cancel our week of Campfirmation at Laurel Ridge, but to re-format our week to a Day Camp setting using the facilities of one of our local churches. Those who complete their work this summer will be confirmed in worship on Reformation Sunday, October 25.

MAY BIRTHDAYS

2 nd Kaden Kelly	4 th Kim Jenkins
5 th Jaxson Moss	8 th Patrick Watson
11 th Tim Eckard, Chuck Whitmire	12 th Chad Russell, Joe Whisnant
14 th Jacob Waldrop	17 th Jill Matthews
18 th Michael Hall	20 th Michael Norman
21 st Mike Smith	22 nd Tawana Jarrett
24 th Luke Setzer	25 th Jessica Maki
27 th Jane Robertson	30 th James Jarrett

**ATTENDANCE AND GIVING TO OUR LORD'S WORK
FOR APRIL 2020**

	4/6/20	4/13/20	4/22/20
Learning Hour	NO WORSHIP DUE TO CORONAVIRUS		
Worship			
General Fund Offerings	1,365.00	6,497.70	1,555.00

General Fund **Offerings**, March 2020 = \$11,732.95
 General Fund **Expenses**, March 2020 = \$12,036.88
 Difference = - \$303.93 (expenses exceeded offerings)
 Needed Each Week = \$3,268.54

THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER is held annually on the first Thursday in May. It will still happen this year only in different ways. There will be speakers on line and you can go to <https://www.nationaldayofprayer.org> for more information. One thing they are asking all people to do is go out on your front porch or front lawn with your family at NOON on Thursday, May 7th, and prayer together the National Prayer for America:

Lord, we exist to give You glory. We exist because of Your glory, and in Your glory, as our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer. We give you thanks and praise for every breath and moment You have given to us. We repent of our sin; for the shameful things we have done against You and for our silence when we did not speak up to proclaim Your Name, profess Your Word, or protect and practice Your will. We ask Your forgiveness. We pray that the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will spread across our nation and the entire earth as we seek Your Kingdom and righteousness; as we walk in obedience to You, and in humble unity, love one another. Jesus, the Bible says that You are “the knowledge of the glory of the Lord.” You have taught us to pray, commanded us to love, and commissioned us to share Your gospel of grace. Your glory fills our hearts and families, it overflows into our neighborhoods, workplaces, campuses, churches, in our entertainment and media. We give thanks for our military and ask that Your glory would spread to, and through them as they preserve freedom around the world. We pray for our government, that all of our leaders and laws would be filled with Your glory, that they would magnify Your Holy Word and honor Your will and ways. We pray that Your grace and glory would spread to bring hope to the hopeless, and love where there is hurt and hate. God, use us as we pray your promise, that “the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.” In Jesus Name, Amen!