

GraceNotes



A Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Newton, NC
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**CHURCH IS OPEN ALL SUMMER LONG!
COME AND WORSHIP!**



**THANKS TO OUR EARTHLY
FATHERS AND TO OUR
HEAVENLY FATHER!**



**CONGRATULATIONS AND
BLESSINGS TO
ALL GRADUATES!**

From the Pastor's Pen.....



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The pandemic is over! Masks are no longer needed. Can we say this? It sure feels good to say it. We have been blessed at Grace to have made it through the storm. Our congregation has been faithful and the giving has held steady. God has supplied our every need. I hope you will join with me in thanking God for his gracious mercy and presence during these past 14 months.

Last month, I attended the Pentecost Retreat of the Society of the Holy Trinity at the Catholic Conference Center in Hickory. I have to say it was one of the most enlightening and educational retreats the Society has hosted in some time. Rev. Dr. Joel Elowsky, Professor of Historical Theology at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis, MO presented an overview of the historical beginnings of the church and of the early church fathers. He shared the histories of Augustine, Cyprian, Athanasius, Clement, Ignatius, Origen and Tertullian, each having their own struggles fighting the heresies of their day. Our creedal statements come from these fathers, as well as deliberate and intentional statements defending the faith. All of them were from northern Africa where the origins and creeds of the Christian faith were formed and taught.

Today, we face another storm much like the same struggles and challenges in the early church. We fight against the attacks of the prince of the air and his demons in an effort to defend the faith. It is a daily struggle. All we have to do is watch the news and we see where the roaring lion is prowling and looking for the next victim to devour.

We all must remain steadfast, holding on to the Word that proclaims Jesus Christ as Lord. We must also remember how important it is to teach the faith to others who come after we are gone. Our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren will be faced with huge challenges in this world, not to mention politically and economically. What we do today will have a great impact on them and their future. So the question remains: what are we doing to insure their future IN the church? Are we building strong faith-followers, or are we simply letting things move on downstream? What are we doing today to insure the future of the church?

We need to wrestle with these questions. I will be offering studies on the early Church Fathers in the Fall, as well as the Ancient and Future Church, which will hopefully give us some insight into how we can meet the challenges ahead as the people of God at Grace. Stay tuned. Be in prayer for our nation and the world. Be in prayer for each other. Be in pray for Grace Church.

God Love you! + Pastor Gil Gilbert, STS

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR JUNE

- ❖ Lector – Mike Pisko
- ❖ Communion Assistants – Herb and Libby Travis
- ❖ Ushers – Rick and Cindy Bivens
- ❖ Altar Preparation – Herb and Libby Travis
- ❖ Offering Tabulators – Todd Childers and Matt Speagle

*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 JUNE



6/06	Kay and Allen Hatchett
6/13	Lorene Heavner
6/20	Lisa Childers-Fox
6/27	Kay and Allen Hatchett

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 bulletin 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 MAY, 2021

	5/02/21	5/9/21	5/16/21	5/23/21
Learning Hour	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Worship	45	50	43	51
General Fund Offerings	\$6,600.00	\$1526.28	\$1,550.00	\$3,726.00

Needed Each Week = \$3,268.54

General Fund **Offerings, April 2021** = \$9,886.00
 General Fund **Expenses, April 2021** = \$9,594.98
 Difference = \$291.10 (offerings exceeded expenses)

THE MEN OF GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST will be held on Saturday, June 12, at 9:00 AM at Four Peas in a Pod Restaurant. Great food, great fellowship, and fabulous prayer!

CONGRATULATIONS TO ALYSSA MCCRARY, Granddaughter of Herb and Libby Travis, on graduating from Caldwell Community College!

WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA VIA de CRISTO

We are pleased to report that we are still on track for all three of our fall Weekends.

Men's #80 will be held Sept. 24-26

Women's #81 will be held Oct. 7-10

Mixed #51 will be held Oct. 14-17

These weekends are in the process of assembling God's teams to serve the weekend guests and team members. If you feel a special calling and would like to be considered to serve on one of these weekends, or if you have never experienced a Via de Cristo weekend and feel the need to have a renewal of Jesus Christ in your daily life, please feel free to contact any of those at Grace who have experienced a weekend: Pastor Gil/Karen Gilbert, Alan/Stormy Shull, Michael Pisko, Ricky/Cindy Bivens, Herb/Libby Travis, David/Iris Sigmon, Shelia Drum, Todd Childers. Be sure to speak with Pastor Gilbert about your desire to attend a weekend and have your questions answered and to complete your Registration Form. Weekends are filling up fast so get your form in ASAP. It will be one of the best weekends of your life.

LAUGHTER IS THE BEST MEDICINE!

- Don't Give Up! Remember that Moses was once a basket case!
- The fact that there's a highway to hell and only a stairway to heaven says a lot about anticipated traffic numbers!
- God did not create anything without a purpose – but mosquitoes come close!
- Adam and Eve – The first people to not read the Apple terms and conditions.
- Jesus is coming! Look busy!!!

PEOPLE GET READY. THERE'S A RALLY DAY COMING!

Summer is right around the corner. It is hoped that we all will stay cool and enjoy our vacations and trips far and near. Make sure to get plenty of rest because in September, the flood gates at Grace will open wide. Rally Day is September 12.

There is a big celebration planned with worship, Learning Hour classes and a big covered-dish luncheon following worship. We are incorporating Homecoming, usually held in August, with Rally Day due to the Covid protocols. Sorry, No Homecoming, but Rally Day will be BIG!

Some have even indicated that Learning Hour classes meet the week prior on Sunday, September 5, which is great. It shows that we all are ready and excited about getting things re-started! It will give us all the opportunity to get back to some sense of "normal". We are asking all the teachers in the Learning Hour not to prepare a lesson for that Sunday but to talk instead about how we have dealt with the pandemic. What did we do with the challenges we faced? What changes did we have to make over the past 14 months? We can also discuss what this new year might hold for us all.

So get ready for Rally Day. It will be a BIG day in the life of our congregation!!!!

SUPPORT LENOIR RHYNE UNIVERSITY

We hope you will take a moment to make a financial gift to Lenoir-Rhyne University today. All gifts to The Fund for Lenoir-Rhyne support every member of our campus community. You may also choose to support a specific program, scholarship or area of campus that's meaningful to you. No matter how you choose to designate your gift, you make an immediate impact for our students, faculty and the programs that make LR distinct and exceptional. This is your Lutheran University!

To make a gift over the phone, please call 828-328-7322. To issue a gift of stocks/securities, or arrange for LRU to be included in your Will, please email gifts@lr.edu or call 828-328-7322. If you would like to mail a gift, please send a check to Lenoir-Rhyne University, PO Box 7467, Hickory, NC 28603-9874. Gifts postmarked by May 31 will be counted toward this fiscal year.

We are grateful for your generosity! Go Bears!

BARNA POLL ON AMERICA'S BIBLE FAITH

Since 2011, our team at Barna has worked alongside our friends at American Bible Society to track the State of the Bible, representing one of the largest data sets on how the population perceives and engages the Bible. As the State of the Bible project enters its second decade, we take a look at notable findings from the 2021 report, offering a glimpse of U.S. adults' perceptions of and interactions with the Bible, both past and present.

The proportion of Bible Users in the United States has remained fairly constant for the past decade. In typical years, approximately half of American adults reach for the Bible at least occasionally. In 2014, our team estimated that an all-time high of 53 percent of American adults were Bible Users, and the low point of 48 percent was reached in 2019.

Over half of U.S. adults (54%) believe that America would be worse off without the Bible, which is actually a 5-percent increase since last year (49% in 2020). One in seven Americans (14%) believes the nation would be better without the Bible, essentially the same as last year's 13 percent. While the proportion with a more negative view remained about the same, there has been a shift from last year for those in the middle. One in three American adults (33%) believe America would be the same with or without the Bible. Five percent of those who were ambivalent last year have moved to a more Bible-affirming view in 2021. (from the Barna Report, May, 2021)

DISCIPLE NUMBERS AT GRACE

Our current numbers at Grace indicated the following for the past months:

- Grace currently has 125 ACTIVE Disciples who worship at least once a month.
- There are 33 INACTIVE Disciples who have not attended worship in 24 months.
- There are 92 (including homebound) who have not attended worship in the past 36 months.
- 17 Households live out-of-town (outside Catawba County).
- The average worship attendance during the past 8 weeks was 47 and is increasing each week.
- The total giving in the past 6 weeks was \$17,685.00

BOARD NOTES

The regular monthly meeting of the Leadership Ministry Board was held on May 16, 2021 at 4:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Devotions and prayer offered by Pastor Gilbert
Absent and Excused were: Gary Leatherman(personal), Jeff Scronce (work), Michael Hall (on vacation), Johnny Moss (medical).

Minutes from the April Meeting were dispensed and will be approved at next month's meeting.

OLD BUSINESS: Contractor who was working on the front doors suffered an accident and broke his tailbone. David Bloom has been contacted by Mark Childers and he will make sure the doors can close and be locked until such time as Chris Scronce can complete the project.

NEW BUSINESS:

Leadership Board Retreat: The Catholic Conference Center has been contacted and is working on a date for the Board Retreat.

Bishop Dan Selbo (NALC) will be in the area this week.

Workshops/Seminars needed for ushers, greeters, lectors, communion assistants will be held during the summer months. Tabulators will be trained as assigned to learn the procedure to tabulate "on the job"

NALC Proposed Amendment to Article 11 (11.01, 11.02, 11.03) – Motion made and seconded. Approved and will be presented at next Congregational Meeting.

NALC Nominations to Executive Council – None made.

MINISTRY TEAMS:

Learning: VBS, July 24-28. Zion Lutheran, Sardis Lutheran, and Plateau Methodist will be joining Grace for VBS, and sharing the costs.

Property: Infestation of mice in parsonage. Approved action to call Fulbright Pest Control.

Worship: Outdoor cross to be removed 5/19.

Witness: see VBS

Stephen Ministry: New Class to begin Monday 6/7/21 at 6 pm.

Fellowship: Rally Day will be September 12 w/covered dish luncheon.

Outdoor Shelter needs to be cleaned, kitchen re-stocked, nativity scene wood to be stored in bus shelter.

Treasurer's Report: Report received.

Joys and Concern shared. Motion to Adjourn made and seconded.

Closing prayer by Pastor Gilbert

Next Meeting: Sunday, June 20 at 4 PM

Devotions: Alan Shull Tabulators for June: Todd Childers and Matt Speagle

Grace Notes

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