

First Sunday of Advent

December 1, 2024 A.D.

10:30 AM



GRACE

Evangelical Lutheran Church



Christ-Centered

Mission-Driven

Traditionally-Grounded

Congregationally-Focused

4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway
Newton, North Carolina 28658
Church Office: 704-462-1035
email: gracenalcnewton@aol.com
www.gracelutheran-newton.org

First Sunday of Advent



Welcome and Announcements

Prelude.....Please Observe Silence For Meditation

* Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness page 56

PRAISE

* Gathering Hymn..... **Oh, Come, Oh, Come, Emmanuel v. 1-4)** **LBW 34**

Advent Wreath Lighting Litany

L: Today is the first Sunday of Advent. Advent means “coming” and in this season we prepare for and celebrate the coming of Christ among us. We rejoice in His first advent, His coming among us now, and prepare for His return. Lighting the candles of the Advent Wreath remind us of the gifts Christ brings to the world. The shape of the Advent Wreath, circle, and its evergreen branches, remind us that there is no beginning and no end to God and that God's love and faithfulness are eternal. The light from the candles - which grows stronger each Sunday in Advent, reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. He is the light that overcomes the darkness. The candles remind us of God’s gifts in Christ: Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Presence. Today we light the candle of hope.

L: The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;

C: those who lived in a land of deep darkness on them light has shined.

L: We join with sisters and brothers around the world, lighting candles to mark our steps in this Advent journey.

C: Today, we light the candle of Hope and give thanks for God’s gift of hope.

We light the Candle of Hope as we sing “A Candle is Burning” by Sandra Dean
(Tune: Away in a Manger)

**A Candle is burning, a flame warm and bright,
a candle of hope in December's dark night.
While angels sing blessing from heaven's starry sky,
our hearts we prepare now for Jesus is nigh.**

L: Even though the world seems dark and cold, we know that the light of Christ is shining in the darkness and the darkness cannot overcome it. The face of our Lord shines upon us and we are saved!

C: Hope is like a light shining in a dark place. We celebrate the hope we have in Jesus Christ and our calling to share this hope with the world by letting our light shine before others.

L: Let us “always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.” (1 Peter 3:14)

C: We continue to hope in God’s promise that Christ will come again to fill our lives and the lift of the world with love and joy and peace.

L: Let us pray: Prayer of the Day

C: Amen.

EQUIP

The First Lesson Jeremiah 33:14-16

L: The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

The Psalm 25:1-10 Bulletin pg. 4

The Second Lesson 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

L: The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

* The Holy Gospel.....Luke 1:5-25

Children's Sermon.....Pastor Doug

The Message.....**“The Surprising Advent of God’s Hope”**Pastor Doug

Hymn of the Day.....**Come Thou Long Expected Jesus**..... **..TCH 244**

* The Apostles’ Creed.....page 65

* The Prayers and the Peace..... page 65

GIVE

The Offering The People of God

* The Offertory and Prayerpages 66, 67

RECEIVE

* The Great Thanksgiving..... page 68

* The Eucharistic Prayer & The Lord’s Prayerpages 69, 71

* **The Distribution of the Holy Sacrament**

Hymn During Communion.....**O Living Bread from Heaven**.....**LBW 197**

* Post-Communion Canticle.....*Thank the Lord*.....page 72

* Post-Communion Prayer

* The Benediction

SEND

* The Sending Hymn**Hark, the Glad Sound!**.....**LBW 35**

* The Dismissal: P: Go in peace. Be the Church! **All: Thanks be to God!**

Postlude

* = Stand Hymnals in Pew Rack: LBW = Green WOV = Blue TCH = Burgundy

WELCOME TO ALL WHO WORSHIP at Grace Church this morning as we gather to worship the Father, + Son and Holy Spirit in truth. As you entered the sanctuary today, you received this bulletin containing the order for worship and announcements. Please also notice the Prayer List where you will find a listing of all the known prayer concerns. You are invited to use this as a guide for your personal prayers throughout the coming week. If you need information about our congregation or if you'd like to update your information, make sure to fill out the yellow Worship Today Form and place it in the offering plate at the time of the offering. If you have a prayer concern, indicate that on your Worship Today Form at the bottom or on the reverse side. If you are seeking a Church Home or would like more information about Grace, please contact the Church Office this week.

THIS WEEK'S THEME: On Christmas Eve in 1223 AD, St. Francis of Assisi prepared the first nativity scene to be used for worship (see newsletter for full story). As worshippers gathered outside a cave in Italy, they saw the Christ child in a manger with hay along with Mary and Joseph, the animals, shepherds, and angels. Since then, the nativity scene has become a part of the way we celebrate Christmas. In this season of Advent and Christmas we are going to hear about each member of the Nativity Scene and see how their story proclaims the Good News of God's love in Christ. Today we will welcome Zechariah and Elizabeth, the parents of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25, 57-80). Now wait a minute, they are not in the Nativity Scene normally; but they should be! God uses this older couple to remind us that He works through surprising and unlikely people and circumstances to bring us hope. Next Sunday, December 8, we will add John the Baptist, the messenger of God who calls us to prepare the way of the Lord (Luke 3:1-20).

FIRST LESSON: Jeremiah 33:14-16

¹⁴"Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will fulfill the promise I made to the house of Israel and the house of Judah. ¹⁵In those days and at that time I will cause a righteous Branch to spring up for David, and he shall execute justice and righteousness in the land. ¹⁶In those days Judah will be saved, and Jerusalem will dwell securely. And this is the name by which it will be called: 'The LORD is our righteousness.'"

PSALM 25:1-10

¹To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul; my God, I put my trust in you;
let me not be humiliated, nor let my enemies triumph over me.

²**Let none who look to you be put to shame;
let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.**

³Show me your ways, O LORD,
and teach me your paths.

⁴**Lead me in your truth and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation; in you have I trusted all the day long.**

⁵Remember, O LORD, your compassion and love,
for they are from everlasting.

**⁶Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions;
remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, O LORD.**

⁷Gracious and upright is the LORD;
therefore he teaches sinners in his way.

**⁸He guides the humble in doing right
and teaches his way to the lowly.**

⁹All the paths of the LORD are love and faithfulness
to those who keep his covenant and his testimonies.

**¹⁰For your name's sake, O LORD,
forgive my sin, for it is great.**

SECOND LESSON: 1 Thessalonians 3:9-13

⁹What thanksgiving can we return to God for you, for all the joy that we feel for your sake before our God, ¹⁰as we pray most earnestly night and day that we may see you face to face and supply what is lacking in your faith? ¹¹Now may our God and Father himself, and our Lord Jesus, direct our way to you, ¹²and may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, as we do for you, ¹³so that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 1:5-25

⁵ In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zechariah, of the division of Abijah. And he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord. ⁷But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and both were advanced in years. ⁸Now while he was serving as priest before God when his division was on duty, ⁹according to the custom of the priesthood, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰And the whole multitude of the people were praying outside at the hour of incense. ¹¹And there appeared to him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. ¹²And Zechariah was troubled when he saw him, and fear fell upon him. ¹³But the angel said to him, "Do not be afraid, Zechariah, for your prayer has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John. ¹⁴And you will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth, ¹⁵for he will be great before the Lord. And he must not drink wine or strong drink, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb. ¹⁶And he will turn many of the children of Israel to the Lord their God, ¹⁷and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to

turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared.”¹⁸ And Zechariah said to the angel, “How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is advanced in years.”¹⁹ And the angel answered him, “I am Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God, and I was sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news.”²⁰ And behold, you will be silent and unable to speak until the day that these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their time.”²¹ And the people were waiting for Zechariah, and they were wondering at his delay in the temple.²² And when he came out, he was unable to speak to them, and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple. And he kept making signs to them and remained mute.²³ And when his time of service was ended, he went to his home.²⁴ After these days his wife Elizabeth conceived, and for five months she kept herself hidden, saying,²⁵ “Thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me, to take away my reproach among people.”

Next Sunday’s Readings: Malachi 3:1-7b; Psalm 66:1-12; Philippians 1:2-11; Luke 3:1-14 [15-20]

Readings are based on the recommended use of the English Standard Version (ESV) by the North American Lutheran Church and Lectionary of Sola Publishing. Used by Permission.

GRACE PRAYER LIST

In the Grace Church Family: Jeffry Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Glenda Childers, Pat Dietz, Allen and Kay Hatchett, Irene Heavner, Larry Heavner, Lorene Heavner, Larry & Brenda Jarrett, Martha Johnson, Faye Lane, Harvey Leatherman, Phil & Malinda Leatherman, Betty Matheson, Jane Moss, Christine Norman, Tricia and Dan Panek, Michael, Debi & Stephen Pisko, Helen Smith, Ethan Starnes, Sandi Tallant, Libby Travis, Shirley Warlick, Scott & Carolyn Whisnant

Nursing Home: Juanita Haas (Trinity Village), Ted Whisnant (Trinity Village)

Friends and Relatives in our Prayers: Pray for Peace in Israel and the World, New Covenant Lutheran Mission Church, Bobby Aderholdt, Jimmy Aderholdt, LeAnn Buckwell, Patsy Bumgardner, Caleb Bumgarner & Family, Becky Cartee, Jessica Cassels & Family, Evelyn Childers, Dennis D’Alessio, Guy Franzen, Stormy Geter, Wendy Hannah, J.C., Rebecca Speagle Jackson, Michele Kirkland, Ray Porter, Lily Rose, Alyssa McCary, Paul and Jenny Mulcahy, Sgt. Ryan McMullen and shift, Angela Sanford, Anita Sabino, Marc Sigmon, Scott Speagle, Zachary Speagle and Amber, Nathan Starnes, Monica Thomas, United States of America; Faye White, and especially the families of those who have given their lives in the service of our country and those who continue to protect our freedoms and for all members of our Armed Forces.

Family and Friends of: Danny Cooper and Randy Sipe

(Names are left on the prayer list for 30 days unless the office is notified otherwise.)

+++++

PLEASE WELCOME PASTOR DOUG HEFNER! We are thrilled that Pastor Doug has been called to serve as our pastor at Grace. He is excited to be with us and is looking forward to getting to know everyone soon. It is his goal to visit everyone within the first couple months of being at Grace. If there is a need that arises and you need to reach him, you may call his cell phone (980)234-8848.



ASHURE MINISTRY is asking for donations this month by filling a box with all the items listed on their Reverse Advent Calendar. How many boxes can our Grace Church family fill-up for those in need this Holiday season, right here in our own community? We have donated 1423 pounds to Ashure in 2024, only 77 more pounds to reach the goal of 1500 pounds!

ADVENT BIBLE STUDY – LED BY PASTOR DOUG - “**The Journey: Walking the Road to Bethlehem**” - Sunday mornings, December 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd at 9:15am. We will journey with Adam Hamilton in the Holy Lands as he travels from Nazareth to Bethlehem in this inspiring look at the birth of Jesus Christ. We will follow the footsteps of Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, and others, gaining insight into our own journey of faith with Christ. Each study will include a 10-minute video clip of Pastor Hamilton teaching on location in the Holy Lands. All you need is your Bible and a desire to grow in God’s Word as you follow Jesus! Our Bible Study will include Bible readings, discussion and sharing, and prayer.

FRED T. FOARD SENIOR LUNCHEON will be held at Sardis Lutheran Church this Wednesday, December 4th at 12:00pm. All are invited! Pastor Doug will be leading the singing of Christmas Carols.

PASTOR DOUG’S INSTALLATION SERVICE will be hosted here at Grace this Saturday, December 7th at 2:00pm. Our area Dean, Rev. Steve Johnson will preach and preside over

the installation. Our neighbors and community churches will be invited. Reception to follow in the Fellowship Hall.

CHRISTMAS CARD “MAILBOXES” are on the back pew of the church today! The folders to put Christmas cards in for those that attend worship, whose family attends, or are homebound. No addresses are needed as nothing gets mailed. It is asked that you place the cards for your friends in their folders. It is also requested that you check YOUR folder on a regular basis and take home any cards you may have received. This is a way for you to save some postage while you send greetings to your church family.

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:

- 3 – Dan Panek
- 4 – River Stainbeck
- 6 – Kenneth Heavner

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

- Today:** **FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
9:30am – Advent Bible Study
10:30am - Worship Celebration
- Wednesday:** 12:00pm – Fred T. Foard Senior Luncheon @ Sardis
- Friday:** Church Office Closed
- Saturday:** 2:00pm - Pastor Doug’s Installation
- Next Sunday:** **SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
9:30am – Advent Bible Study
10:30am - Worship Celebration

The Ministers.....	The People of Grace Lutheran Church
Pastor	Doug Hefner
Organist.....	Sandi Tallant
Administrative Assistant	Kristi Tucker
Leadership Board President	Tim Eckard
Youth Leader	Stormy Shull
Lector	Stormy Shull
Communion Assistants.....	Rick & Cindy Bivens
Ushers	David Wilfong & Jack Wilfong
Altar Preparation.....	Herb & Libby Travis
Offering Tabulators	Todd Childers & Sheila Drum
Custodian	Chris Abernethy