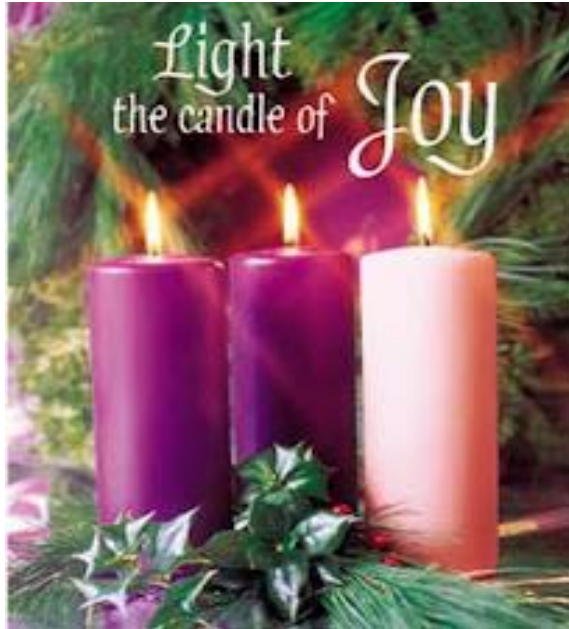


Third Sunday of Advent

December 15, 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

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email: pastorhefner@aol.com

Third Sunday of Advent



Prelude Please Observe Silence For Meditation

Welcome and Announcements

- * Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness page 56

PRAISE

- * Gathering Hymn **Angels from the Realms of Glory** **LBW 50**

Lighting the Advent Candles: Today We Light the Candle of Joy

L: We have lit two candles which remind us of God's gifts of hope and peace that come to us in our Savior, Christ Jesus. Our hope in Christ is like an anchor to our souls, firm and strong in the midst of storms. In Christ we have peace with God and one another. The third candle of Advent is the Candle of Joy. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she would give birth the long-awaited Messiah, she was filled with joy.

C: She sang a song of joy: "My soul magnifies the Lord, my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." (Luke 1)

L: When Jesus was born, the angels announced the good news of great joy to the shepherds:

C: "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. (Luke 2)

L: Jesus said that "the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field."

C: "When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field." (Matthew 13)

L: Jesus came "to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—

C: to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair." (Isaiah 61)

L: Jesus said, "If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love."

C: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹² My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you." (John 15)

L: As we continue our journey in the Advent Season, we ask God to restore our joy.

C: Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit, to sustain me. (Psalm 51)

We Light the Advent Candle of Joy as we sing "**A Candle is Burning**" to the tune of Away in a Manger

**A candle is burning, a candle of joy.
A candle to welcome brave Mary's new boy.
Our hearts fill with wonder, and eyes light and glow
as joy brightens winter like sunshine on snow.**

L: Let us pray. God of hope, peace and joy, we thank you for the gift of joy that comes to us in Christ who has restored unto us the joy of our salvation. Prepare our hearts to be transformed by You, that we may walk in the light of Christ and joyfully shine the light of Christ's love. As we continue our Advent journey, help us, like Mary, to joyfully worship You, to hear Your Word and to do your will so that our joy may be complete in Christ, for it is in Jesus' name that we pray. **C: Amen**

EQUIP

The First Lesson..... Zephaniah 3:14-20

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

Mary's Song of Praise: The Magnificat Luke 1:46-55

The Second Lesson Philippians 4:4-7

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

* The Holy Gospel Luke 1:26-45

Children's Sermon Pastor Doug

The Message....."The Gift of Joy: Have a *Mary* Christmas!" Pastor Doug

Hymn of the Day.....**Good Christian Friends, Rejoice** **LBW 55**

* The Apostles' Creed.....page 65

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

GIVE

The Offering The People of God

* The Offertory and Prayer pages 66, 67

RECEIVE

* The Great Thanksgiving.....page 68

* The Eucharistic Prayer & The Lord's Prayer..... pages 69, 71

* **The Distribution of the Holy Sacrament**

Hymn During Communion.....**Lo, How a Rose is Growing**..... **LBW 58**

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

* Post-Communion Prayer

* The Benediction

SEND

* The Sending Hymn**Joy to the World** **LBW 39**

* 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 Pastor Doug (980)234-8848.

THIS WEEK'S THEME In this season of Advent and Christmas we are going to hear about each member of the Nativity and see how their story proclaims the Good News of God's love in Christ. On Dec. 1 we heard the story of Zechariah and Elizabeth, who put their HOPE in God and were blessed to be the parents of John the Baptist (Luke 1:5-25, 57-80). Last week we heard the story of John the Baptist, the messenger of God who calls us to prepare the way of the Lord (Luke 3:1-20). John the Baptizer called people to repent of their sins, find renewal in God's forgiveness, and recommit their lives to following Christ through faithful discipleship! Renewed and restored in Christ, we experience PEACE with God and the PEACE of God. Today we hear the story of Mary (Luke 1:26-38 The Annunciation, Luke 1:39-45 Mary's Visit with Elizabeth, Luke 1:46-55 The Magnificat Mary's Song of Praise). God, in His grace, chooses Mary to be the mother of the promised Savior. God looks upon the heart and chooses this humble, lowly, and faithful servant. The power of the God's Holy Spirit will come upon her and bring about this miracle pregnancy and birth. "For nothing will be impossible with God!" Mary's response reminds us of the JOY of God's love in Christ for us: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." Elizabeth and her baby respond with JOY over this news and Mary praises God with JOY in her song "The Magnificat." JOY is a gift from God that goes beyond circumstantial happiness. We can always have joy in hearts because we know we are loved, forgiven, and saved in our Lord Jesus! This outrageous joy is also contagious as we share the love of Jesus in word and deed with others.

FIRST LESSON: Zephaniah 3:14-20

¹⁴"Sing aloud, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O daughter of Jerusalem! ¹⁵The Lord has taken away the judgments against you; he has cleared away your enemies. The King of Israel, the Lord, is in your midst; you shall never again fear evil. ¹⁶On that day it shall be said to Jerusalem: Fear not, O Zion; let not your hands grow weak. ¹⁷The Lord your God is in your midst, a mighty one who will save; he will rejoice

over you with gladness; he will quiet you by his love; he will exult over you with loud singing. ¹⁸I will gather those of you who mourn for the festival, so that you will no longer suffer reproach. ¹⁹Behold, at that time I will deal with all your oppressors. And I will save the lame and gather the outcast, and I will change their shame into praise and renown in all the earth. ²⁰At that time I will bring you in, at the time when I gather you together; for I will make you renowned and praised among all the peoples of the earth, when I restore your fortunes before your eyes," says the Lord.

Mary's Song of Praise: The Magnificat Luke 1:46-55

⁴⁶ And Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord,

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ **for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.**

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

⁴⁹ for he who is mighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.

⁵⁰ **And his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.**

⁵¹ He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

⁵² **he has brought down the mighty from their thrones
and exalted those of humble estate;**

⁵³ he has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.

⁵⁴ **He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,**

⁵⁵ **as he spoke to our fathers,
to Abraham and to his offspring forever."**

SECOND LESSON: Philippians 4:4-7

⁴Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. ⁵Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; ⁶do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. ⁷And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Luke 1:26-45

²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said,

“Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!”²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.³⁰ And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”³⁵ And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.”³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren.³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.”³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.³⁹ In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah,⁴⁰ and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth.⁴¹ And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit,⁴² and she exclaimed with a loud cry, “Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!⁴³ And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.”

Next Sunday’s Readings: Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80:1-7; Hebrews 10:5-10; Matthew 1:18-25

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: Jeffrey 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, John & Terry Barnett, 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, Ray Porter, Lily Rose, Alyssa McCary, 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: Randy Sipe

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

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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.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LEADERSHIP MINISTRY BOARD is scheduled for tomorrow, Monday, December 16th at 6:00 pm.

THE GRACE PRAYER LUNCHEON AND CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION will be held this Wednesday, December 18th from 12-2pm in the Grace Fellowship Hall. All are welcome to attend and please bring a friend! The menu for December is Finger Foods! Please plan to join us as we celebrate Christmas by singing Christmas Carols and having a fun gift exchange (PLEASE BRING A \$5 GIFT).

CHRISTMAS EVE HOLY COMMUNION AND CANDLELIGHT SERVICE - Invite your family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors as we celebrate the birth of Christ! Tuesday, December 24th at 4:00pm.

REMEMBER TO PICK UP YOUR 2024 OFFERING ENVELOPES which are located on the back pew. If you can deliver envelopes to others, please do. If there are no envelopes with your name and you desire a set, please contact the church office.

PASTOR’S INSTALLATION SERVICE from Pastor Doug: I would like to thank everyone for the beautiful and inspirational Installation Service and Reception held on Dec. 7. The service and the reception was wonderful and greatly enjoyed by all. Thanks especially to all who worked so hard to make it a special day. I am thankful to be serving the Lord with you at Grace!

CHRISTMAS CARD “MAILBOXES” are now available. There are folders on the back

pew of the church to put Christmas cards in for those that regularly 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.

ASHURE MINISTRY – Thank you all for your donations to ASHURE Ministry this year. We exceeded our goal with total donations this year of 1524 pounds. There is still more time left to continue contributing to the Reverse Advent Calendar need. Please refer to your newsletter for those items.

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 15 – Troy Feimster | 22 – Susan Setzer |
| 17 – Evelyn Willis | 22 – Hagan Hall |
| 21 – Kristi Tucker | 22 – Tom Devine |

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

- Today:** **THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
 9:15am – Advent Bible Study
 10:30am - Worship Celebration
- Monday:** 6:00 - Leadership Ministry Board
- Wednesday:** 12:00pm – Prayer Luncheon & Christmas Celebration
- Friday:** Church Office Closed
- Next Sunday:** **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
 9:15am – Advent Bible Study
 10:30am - Worship Celebration

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|----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 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 |