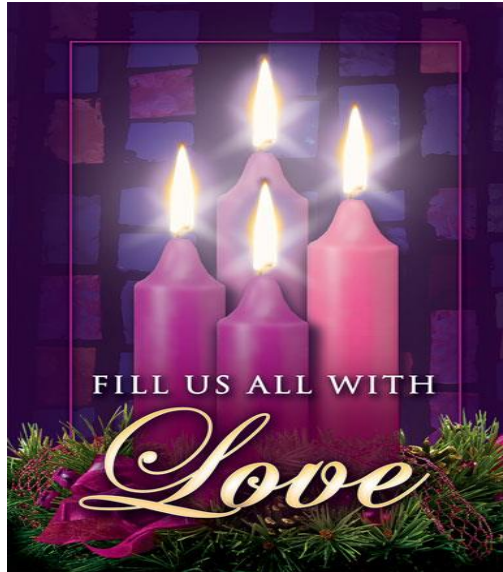


Fourth Sunday of Advent

December 22, 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

Rev. Doug Hefner - cell: (980)234-8848

email: pastorhefner@aol.com

Fourth Sunday of Advent



Prelude Please Observe Silence For Meditation

Welcome and Announcements

- * Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness page 56

PRAISE

- * The Gathering Hymn **O Little Town of Bethlehem** **LBW 41**

The Lighting of the Advent Candles: We Light the Candle of Love

L: We have lit the candles of hope, peace and joy so far in our Advent journey to remind us of God’s gifts of hope, peace and joy that bring light to our darkness. Today is the fourth Sunday of Advent and we light the Candle of love. With this flame we signify the love of God that surrounds and fills us at all times, which we recognize in a special way in the Christmas story. There is no greater power than love. It is stronger than rulers and empires, stronger than grief or despair, stronger even than death. We love, because God loves us.

C: Jesus shows us God's perfect love. He is God's perfect love in human form. Those who believe in him and live in him, live in love. Love transforms and perfects all things. It never ends.

L: Jesus calls us to walk in His love and to love one another as He loves us.

C: Beloved, let us love, not just in word or speech, but in truth and action. By our love, the world will know that we are disciples of Christ.

We sing “A Candle is Burning” (tune: Away in a Manger) as we light the Candle of Peace

*A candle is burning, a candle of love,
a candle to point us to heaven above,
A baby for Christmas, a wonderful birth,
for Jesus is bringing God's love to our earth.*

L: Let us pray -- O God of Love, Emmanuel, send your light into our hearts at this time. Help us to be ready for the time of Christ's appearing. Grant that we may so dwell in him that His perfect love fills our entire being. Bless our worship as we celebrate your love and are made ready to show that love to the whole world - both today - and forevermore; in Jesus’ name. **Amen.**

EQUIP

The First Lesson..... Micah 5:2-5a

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

The Psalm 80:1-7..... Bulletin pg. 4

The Second Lesson 1 John 4:7-12

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

* The Holy Gospel Matthew 1:18-25

Children's Sermon Pastor Doug

The Message..... **"The Gift of Love – Emmanuel, God with Us"** Pastor Doug

Hymn of the Day..... **God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen Lead by Pastor Doug**

1. God rest you merry, gentlemen Let nothing you dismay
Remember, Christ, our Savior Was born on Christmas day
To save us all from Satan's power When we were gone astray

**Chorus: O tidings of comfort and joy,
Comfort and joy, O tidings of comfort and joy**

2. In Bethlehem, in Israel, This blessed Babe was born
And laid within a manger Upon this blessed morn
The which His Mother Mary Did nothing take in scorn **Chorus**

3. From God our Heavenly Father A blessed Angel came;
And unto certain Shepherds Brought tidings of the same:
How that in Bethlehem was born The Son of God by Name. **Chorus**

4. "Fear not then," said the Angel, "Let nothing you affright,
This day is born a Savior Of a pure Virgin bright,
To free all those who trust in Him from Satan's power and might." **Chorus**

5. Now to the Lord sing praises, All you within this place,
And with true love and brotherhood Each other now embrace;
This holy tide of Christmas All other doth deface. **Chorus**

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

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

GIVE

The OfferingThe 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.....**What Child is This.....LBW 58**

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

* Post-Communion Prayer

* The Benediction

SEND

- * The Sending Hymn**Angels We have Heard on High** **LBW 71**
 - * 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.

FIRST LESSON: Micah 5:2-5a

²But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days. ³Therefore he shall give them up until the time when she who is in labor has given birth; then the rest of his brothers shall return to the people of Israel. ⁴And he shall stand and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord his God. And they shall dwell secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth. ⁵And he shall be their peace.

PSALM 80:1-7

¹Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim.

²**In the presence of Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh,
stir up your strength and come to help us.**

³Restore us, O God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

⁴**O Lord God of hosts,
how long will you be angered despite the prayers of your people?**

⁵You have fed them with the bread of tears;
you have given them bowls of tears to drink.

**⁶You have made us the derision of our neighbors,
and our enemies laugh us to scorn.**

⁷Restore us, O God of hosts;
show the light of your countenance, and we shall be saved.

SECOND LESSON: 1 John 4:7-12

⁷Dear friends, let us continue to love one another, for love comes from God. Anyone who loves is a child of God and knows God. ⁸But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love⁹God showed how much he loved us by sending his one and only Son into the world so that we might have eternal life through him. ¹⁰This is real love—not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a sacrifice to take away our sins.¹¹Dear friends, since God loved us that much, we surely ought to love each other. ¹²No one has ever seen God. But if we love each other, God lives in us, and his love is brought to full expression in us.

THE HOLY GOSPEL: Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ²⁴When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

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, Nancy Willis

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, Lily Rose, Alyssa McCary, Sgt. Ryan McMullen and shift, Katie Patton, Ray Porter, 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: Elizabeth Grace Hefner

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

+++++

THE PEOPLE OF GOD AT GRACE extend our Christian sympathy, love and prayers to the family and friends of Elizabeth Grace Hefner, who entered the Church Triumphant on Saturday, December 14, 2024. Elizabeth is the daughter of Pastor Doug and the mother of Gabby. Services to celebrate and remember Elizabeth were held on Saturday at St. John’s Lutheran Church in Statesville, NC. May God comfort all who mourn.

PASTOR DOUG AND HIS FAMILY would like to thank everyone for your love and support shown so beautifully in your prayers, hugs, kind words, calls, cards, encouragement, and gifts of food. Thank you for joining us to remember and give thanks to God for the life and eternal life of Elizabeth Grace Hefner, Pastor Doug's beloved daughter and Gabby's beautiful, loving mother; sister to Pastor Doug's son, Matthew Hefner; granddaughter to Jack Hefner, and niece to Jeff and Tina Hefner. It is a great comfort and source of strength to be a part of God's family at Grace and we appreciate you all! Thank you all for your continued prayers, love, and support as we heal and move forward in Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, the Resurrection and the Life! Thank you, Pastor Doug and Family.

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.

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.

CHRISTMAS CARD “MAILBOXES” are available 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.



*"1Hear, O Shepherd of Israel, leading Joseph like a flock;
shine forth, you that are enthroned upon the cherubim."*

Psalm 80:1

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:

22 – Susan Setzer	24- Jeffry Bivens
22 – Hagan Hall	25 – Faye Lane
22 – Tom Devine	28 – Kim Parker
28 – Landon Moss	

THIS WEEK AT GRACE

Today: **FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
9:15am – Advent Bible Study
10:30am - Worship Celebration

Tuesday: 4:00pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Thursday & Friday: Church Office Closed

Next Sunday: **FIRST SUNDAY OF CHRISTMAS**
9:30am – Sunday School
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 LeaderStormy Shull
LectorStormy Shull
Communion Assistants.....Rick & Cindy Bivens
UshersDavid Wilfong & Jack Wilfong
Altar Preparation.....Herb & Libby Travis
Offering Tabulators Todd Childers & Sheila Drum
Custodian Chris Abernethy