

Grace Notes



Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Lutheran Church in Newton, NC

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9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service with Communion

Volume 228, Number 2

FEBRUARY 2025

What is Your Love Language?

An Epiphany Message from Pastor Doug Hefner

Jesus said, "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." John 3:16

Using digital voice recorders over an eight-year period, researchers at the University of Arizona studied how many words hundreds of college students spoke over several days. The students carried the voice-activated recorders for almost all of their waking hours, on average about 17 hours a day.

The study found that women spoke 16,215 words a day, while men spoke 15,669. Although women speak slightly more words than men, statistically, the difference is insignificant, according to Matthias R. Mehl, a psychology professor at the University of Arizona and the study's lead author. **Now considering an average life span one may speak about 500-800 Million words in a lifetime!** Now that is a lot of words! I am sure that you will agree that not all of those words have equal value. Many of those words have been forgotten (chit chat, banter) or you wish you could forget them or never said them. Ah, but other words are precious; words like ***"I love you, I do, it's a girl or a boy, I forgive you, thank you, I care about you, I will be there for you!"*** that have been spoken to loved ones at special times are words that we remember. These are words that are most important and words that define our relationships with one another.

Now what about Jesus, the Word made flesh, the living Word. If you look at the Gospels you will see that Jesus spoke approximately 30,000 words that appear in the New Testament. Indeed some of Jesus' words carry more weight than others. For example, John 3:16, "For God so loved the world..." is one of the most well-known Scripture passages of Jesus' word to us. ***To the hungry Jesus said, "I am the Living Bread", to the dying and grieving, He said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life", to the vulnerable and struggling, Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd", to the lost and uncertain Jesus said, "I am the Way the Truth and the Life." To those carrying heavy burdens Jesus said, "Come unto me all who are weary and carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest."*** What about Jesus' Words from the cross, "Father forgive them

for they know not what they do” or “It is finished.” Jesus died for us so that our sins would be forgiven and He completed everything needed for our salvation! And so Jesus sends us out, “Peace be with you, as the Father has sent me so send I you.” We are called as God’s disciples to share the Word of God in word and deed!

Many of us will be thinking about love this month as this is the month of Valentine’s Day, February 14. As we continue our Epiphany journey this month we remember our God who is love, who loves us in Jesus Christ, and who shows us what true love is all about. It is important to let the people in our lives know that we love them. In his book, The Five Love Languages, Gary Chapman writes about the different ways in which we communicate our love and the ways in which we feel loved. Everyone has a unique love language, the way in which love is expressed best for them. Chapman writes about the following top five love languages: **1. Words of Affirmation, 2. Quality Time, 3. Receiving Gifts, 4. Acts of Service, and 5. Physical Touch (Showing affection)**. If someone knows our love language, then they can best discover how to fill up our “emotional tank” with love in the way that we best understand love. Likewise, we can learn to love others in our life by discovering how love is best demonstrated in their lives.

One thing is certain, we can express love verbally, but words alone are not sufficient. We must demonstrate our love for one another in word and deed. And perhaps the best way to love is to say it and show it! Isn’t that what God has done for us! In the Bible, God’s Story, Our Story, God expresses His love for us many times in both word and deed. But God’s definitive way of telling us of His love is in Jesus. In Romans 6:8 we read, **“God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us!”** Wow, now that is amazing grace. God spoke His love for us and He went further; He demonstrated His love for us in giving His only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord as a sacrifice for our sins. Epiphany means to “make known” or “to reveal” or “manifest”. In this Epiphany Season we have seen how Jesus’ identity (baptism) and His mission (Anointed to proclaim the good news) has been made know to us. In Jesus’ words (teaching, preaching) and actions (healing, miracles, compassion) God’s love is made know to us. And these words of life are so precious to us. They remind us that we are the forgiven, loved, and chosen sons and daughters of God. Jesus sends us out to be His disciples, to demonstrate His love to the world, in word and deed!

The average book of 200 pages has about 64000 words. By doing some math, we speak through our words about 100 books a year. Now imagine 100 books times the number of years you have been alive, for me that is almost 6,000 books. Now also imagine someone coming into that library and pulling down a book. Would you be happy for them to read it, or would you feel anxious, what would the books say about your heart, your life, your spiritual maturity, your priorities? And just as important, would others believe your words by the way you live and put them into action? We all have fallen short of the glory of God. So let us repent and turn back to the Lord and ask Him to renew us and help us to reflect the Living Word in our words and actions.

I look forward to sharing in these times of worship and Bible Study with you as we journey together with Christ. In these very important seasons of the Church Year we see Christ

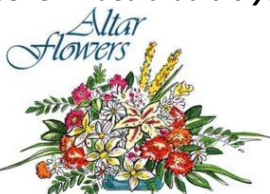
demonstrating God’s love for us and calling us to demonstrate His love in our lives of discipleship! **We are establishing 4 ministry teams that will help us live out our discipleship: 1. Worship, Christian Education and Youth 2. Witness and Outreach, 3. Stephen Ministry/Fellowship/Hospitality, and 4. Property and Cemetery.** It is my prayer and the leadership board’s prayer that every member will be on one of these four ministry teams so that we can respond faithfully and lovingly to God’s call for Grace. We will be talking more about this over the upcoming Sunday’s in worship.

God’s Blessings, Peace and Joy be with you, Pastor Doug Hefner

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR FEBRUARY

- ✚ Lector Tim Eckard
- ✚ Ushers Jeff Scronce & Jack Wilfong
- ✚ Communion Assistants Herb & Libby Travis
- ✚ Altar Preparation Herb & Libby Travis
- ✚ Offering Tabulators Todd Childers & Tim Eckard

*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 FEBRUARY

2/2	Belinda Wilfong	2/16	OPEN
2/9	OPEN	2/23	OPEN

If you wish to place flowers on 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.* The liturgical color of the day is listed to assist you in selecting flowers appropriate for that Sunday. Please notify the Church Office by the Tuesday prior to your selected Sunday to ensure correct information is printed in the bulletin.

ATTENDANCE AND GIVING TO OUR LORD’S WORK FOR DECEMBER & JANUARY

	12/29/24	1/5/25	1/12/25	1/19/25
Sunday School	9	9	N/A	13
Worship	36	48	34	45
General Fund Offerings	\$1,045	\$3,370	\$1,227	\$4,225

Needed Each Week = \$3,268.54

General Fund Offerings, December 2024 = \$12,691

General Fund Expenses, December 2024 = \$13,736.80

Difference = -\$1,045.80 (expenses exceeded offerings)



Ashure
MINISTRY

SERVE 40: Lenten Volunteer Initiative

The Season of Lent is a time of reflection, prayer, service, and fasting as we await Easter and the celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. Many Christians choose to take on a Lenten discipline during this time. In the spirit of this season, Ashure Ministry is asking folks to consider doing their Lenten discipline with the ministry, and **SERVE 40** hours of volunteer service during the Lenten Season from Ash Wednesday (March 5th) to Good Friday (April 18th).

If you are interested, or would like to find out more, please contact our Volunteer Engagement Director, Allen Sherrill at a.sherrill@ashureministry.org. God bless you all, and we hope you will use this Lenten Season to reflect on the amazing victory we will celebrate on Easter!



ASHURE MINISTRY FOOD ASK for the month of February is **Macaroni, Pasta or Canned Spaghetti Sauce**. We are doing great things at Grace in helping feed the hungry in our own community. So far **55 pounds** have been donated in January. Let's try to donate 2,000 in 2025! That would be around 170 pounds per month. We can do it! Let's come together to help reach this goal!

Season of Epiphany Worship Schedule for 2025

9:15am Sunday School; 10:30am Worship Service with Communion

February 2, 2025 4th Sun after the Epiphany Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6; 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13; Luke 4:31-44. In our Gospel lesson we see Jesus' love in action: delivering people from demon possession, healing people with disease, and passionately preaching the Good news of God's love. St. Paul in 1 Corinthians 13 reminds us of the centrality of love (agape) in our words and actions; without love they are nothing. With love, our words and actions can heal, deliver, comfort, strengthen, and give hope.

February 9, 2025 5th Sun after the Epiphany. Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]; Psalm 138; 1 Corinthians 14:12b-20; Luke 5:1-11. In our gospel reading for the day, Jesus guides the disciples to a miraculous catch of fish. Jesus then calls them to be his disciples, to follow Him and become fishers of people. We are called by our baptism and the Spirit through God's Word to be God's disciples, God's mission team in the world today. We are called to make God's love in Christ known to the world. Today is the Super Bowl and we will see two teams face off to see who the champion will be. It always comes down to team work – to make the dream work. And so it is with us, the Church, the body of Christ, God's mission team, the dream team!

February 16, 2025 6th Sun after the Epiphany. Jeremiah 17:5-8; Psalm 1; 1 Corinthians 15:[1-11] 12-20; Luke 6:17-26. Our gospel reading is Jesus' "Sermon on the Plain." Jesus proclaims blessing upon those who turn to Him in faith and speaks woes to those who live for themselves.

February 23, 2025 7th Sun after the Epiphany, FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY – BRING A FRIEND WITH YOU TO WORSHIP TODAY! Ecclesiastes 4:9-10, Psalm 25:12-25, Colossians 4:7-18 Luke 5:17-25. Each of our lessons for this day have something powerful to teach us about the blessing of God's friendship with us and our Godly friendship with one another. God created us to be in relationship with Him and one another. For this Sunday, please invite your friends to Grace. We will have a special gift for each friend that you invite. You will receive soon some invitations to hand out or to post online or send as email.

March 2, 2025, Transfiguration of Our Lord Sunday Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 99; Hebrews 3:1-6; Luke 9:28-36. The story of the Transfiguration of Jesus reminds us that we need those mountain-top experiences that make Christ known to us in a clearer way so that we can go back down the mountain to be an epiphany, to make God known in the living out of our faith in word and deed.

March 5, 2025 Ash Wednesday Holy Communion. We will begin the Season of Lent with the Ash Wednesday Service which will include Confession, the Imposition of Ashes, Prayers, Scripture, and Holy Communion. There will be an abbreviated service at 12noon and the full service at 7:00pm.

NEW BIBLE STUDY AND VESPERS: Join us in our new Bible Study and Vespers each **Wednesday night from 6:30pm – 7:30pm, beginning February 5th**. We will be studying 1, 2 & 3 John. For any questions, please see Pastor Doug.

FRED T. FOARD SENIOR LUNCHEON will be held at Ebenezer UMC on Wednesday, **February 5th at 12:00pm**. All are invited!

THE GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST will be held on **Saturday, February 8th at 9:00am** at Four Peas in a Pod Restaurant on Highway 70 in Conover. Great food and great fellowship! Please come and bring a friend!

STEPHEN MINISTRY SUPERVISION will be held on **Monday, February 10th at 6:00pm**. For more information or any questions, please reach out to Herb Travis (704)240-7359.

THE GRACE PRAYER LUNCHEON will be held on **Wednesday, February 19th at noon in the Fellowship Hall**. This is a time for any adults from Grace and the community to come together for food and fellowship! The menu for February is pintos, coleslaw, candied yams and a surprise dessert. Please give Betty Wilfong a call at (828) 461-6604 for any questions.

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LEADERSHIP MINISTRY BOARD is scheduled for **Monday, February 17th at 6:00 pm**.



Hart Square Sweet Hart Pioneer Dinner
February 8th and 22nd, 5-8 p.m.

Shared Table - \$75/person Private Table for Two - \$200

Join us for a one-of-a-kind dinner experience! Using a traditional 1800's cookbook, Chef Ben Sullivan of Cranford Hospitality will craft a multi-course dinner that embraces our ancestral roots with a modern twist.

Reserve your seat today! (828)222-3727

First Course

Biscuits with Butter and Pepper Jelly

Second Course

Kale and Winter Squash Salad *with spiced pecans, pickled onions, apples, and ginger dressing*

Third Course

Roasted Chicken Breast *with creamed greens, cornmeal dumplings, and country ham butter sauce*

Fourth Course

Sweet Potato Pudding *with caramelized buttermilk sauce*



**ASHURE MINISTRY'S 7TH ANNUAL
MARCH MADNESS CHALLENGE**

MARCH 1 - APRIL 9

Each pound of food
donated = 2 points

Each dollar
donated = 3 points

**THE TEAM WITH THE MOST POINTS WINS!
DONATIONS CAN BE BROUGHT TO ASHURE MINISTRY
MONDAYS-THURSDAYS FROM 9-4PM.**

**Include
with donation:**

**Team name, church or
business name & your name**

Our March Madness Challenge rallies businesses, churches, schools, and individuals to compete in donating food or funds under their favorite NCAA basketball team's banner, all while supporting a great cause!

Give Today at ashureministry.org/mmc

Ashure Ministry PO Box 31 245 East N. Street, Newton, NC 28658

For more information, contact: Allen Sherrill

a.sherrill@ashureministry.org (828) 446-5418



LEADERSHIP MINISTRY BOARD

MINUTES

Monday, January 20, 2025

Call to Order Called to order at 6:00 PM by Tim Eckard

Devotions Pastor Hefner opened with prayer.

Roll Call

Present: Pastor Doug Hefner; Tim Eckard, President; Jason Yoder, Vice President; Rick Bivens, Treasurer; Alan Shull;

Absent: Libby Travis, Sheila Drum, Jeff Scronce, Gary Leatherman

New Business

A. There were not enough board members present to have a quorum or conduct business. However several topics were discussed.

- Discussed combining Teams and get numerous church members assigned to each.
Examples: Praise & Worship / Youth Ministry / Education
Outreach / Evangelism
Stephen Ministry / Fellowship / Hospitality
Property / Cemetery
Discussed ways in which to improve this. Having members complete a spiritual inventory sheet.
- Discussed filling empty Board Position.
- Discussed outreach options: signs, letters etc
- Thrivent Financial has options for outreach.
- Well was inspected this month.
- Power was previously out at Union Church. Duke Power contacted. They replaced the transformer and meter on the church.
- Installation of new board members will be Sunday 26th.

Adjournment:

- Next board meeting is set for Monday, January 27th @ 6pm.

Grace Notes

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church NALC
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