

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

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OCTOBER 2025

In These Uncertain and Changing Times We Live in We Find Hope and Peace in the Reformation Moto: "The Word of the Lord Endures Forever"

Message by Pastor Doug Hefner

*1 Peter 1:18-19,23-25 You know that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without defect or blemish... ²³ You have been born anew, not of perishable but of imperishable seed, **through the living and enduring word of God.**^[g] ²⁴ For "All flesh is like grass and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls,²⁵ but **the word of the Lord endures forever.**" That word is the good news that was announced to you.*

St. Peter in the passage above points to the good news that we have been "ransomed" or saved not with perishable worldly treasures but with the precious blood of Christ. This good news comes to us through the living and enduring Word of God! He goes on to point out the perishable or changing nature of our flesh (and our world) – comparing our experience to grass and flowers – they fall, wither and fade. **But, the word of the Lord endures forever!** Our hope is in the unchanging love and grace of God in Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 13:8 we are comforted that ***"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever!"*** In the verses before verse 8 we are reminded of two more important truths: vs 5 ***For God has said, "I will never fail you. I will never forsake you."*** And in verse 6: ***"That is why we can say with confidence, The Lord is my helper, so I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"*** So my dear friends in Christ, let us find comfort and confidence in the unchanging love of God in Christ and His Word that endures forever!

On October 31, 1517, Martin Luther pointed to the enduring, authoritative Word of God in his 95 Theses to begin a debate over the errors he saw being committed by the Roman

Catholic Church. Luther spoke about the error of indulgences (among many things) and their false promise to provide forgiveness and salvation. Martin Luther then pointed out the truth: our forgiveness and salvation come from Christ alone by His grace poured out to us in Christ's death and resurrection. We receive this gift through our faith alone in Christ as our Lord and Savior. Already you can see the major themes or Solas "alone" of the Reformation: **Christ Alone, Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, to God alone be the glory!** (The Five Solas will be our theme for the 5 Wednesday Vespers services in October, see below). As this movement grew, Luther would return over and over again to the enduring Word of God. Luther saw how the errors of the Medieval Church eclipsed the light of the Gospel. The Reformation movement relied upon God's Word to uncover the light of God's Gospel truth which had been eclipsed by sin and error.

Proclaiming the truth of God's Word against the errors of the Medieval Church was dangerous. Reformers before Luther were martyred and Luther himself was labeled an outlaw and heretic and would have experienced the same if not for the protection of the German leaders. And yet through it all, God raised up people to proclaim the truth of the Word of God. Martin Luther inspired many to stand upon the enduring Word of God and that is exactly what he said when he was at trial and asked to recant his writings: ***"Here I Stand (on Scripture), I can do no other, so help me God!"*** In fact, the motto of the Lutheran Reformation, is Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum (***The Word of the Lord Endures Forever***) According to Lutheranreformation.org: "It (this motto VDMA) first appeared in the court of Frederick the Wise in 1522. He had it sewn onto the right sleeve of the court's official clothing, which was worn by prince and servant alike. It was used by Frederick's successors, his brother John the Steadfast, and his nephew John Frederick the Magnanimous. It became the official motto of the Smalcaldic League and was used on flags, banners, swords, and uniforms as a symbol of the unity of the Lutheran laity who struggled to defend their beliefs, communities, families, and lives against those who were intent on destroying them. It was found inscribed inside churches, over doorways, on foundation stones, even on horse's helmets! The VDMA logo and statement has appeared throughout Lutheran churches worldwide and remains an enduring motto of the Reformation to this day." Indeed, we should put these words on our door and around our church and in many places to remind ourselves that **"The Word of the Lord endures forever!"**

How can we better understand Scripture and the confessions of faith that came out of the Reformation called the "Book of Concord"? How can we grow Christian disciples that follow Christ and make Christ known in word and deed? **Well it all starts with the Bible, the Word of God, which is our main focus here at Grace.** We gather in worship to encounter the Living Word, Christ, and in the Word of God and in the Sacraments, the

Visible Words of grace. We gather in Bible Studies to better understand God's Word and to study, pray over and discuss it together, and apply it to our lives as we live it out. God's Word is the sole norm and authority of the Christian life, so we turn to it daily for guidance, power, strength, hope and life. As we approach the anniversary of the great Reformation movement once again we will focus on Scripture and the Book of Concord which includes the Small and Large Catechism, the Augsburg Confession, The Ecumenical Creeds, etc. In October I will present a sermon series based on the 6 parts of Luther's Small/Large Catechism. Luther wrote the catechisms after visiting the parishes and people of the Germany. He found that many did not even know the basics of the faith. His Small Catechism was first published as flyers and posters that could be used in the home. Martin Luther called parents to learn about their faith and God's Word and to teach it to their children. Also, Luther found that the clergy also needed more education and wrote the Large Catechism for them. In addition, Luther wrote and preached many sermons on the catechism to reinforce the faith of the people. Luther began the catechism with the Ten Commandments to remind us first that we are sinners in need of the Savior (The Law). He then moved to the Apostles' Creed which is the Gospel, what God has done for us in His grace. Next, transformed by the gospel we as God's children call out to our Father in the Lord's Prayer for every need that we have and for help in living out our faith. Luther then turns to the means of grace where God imparts the gifts of Christ to us in Baptism, Holy Communion, and the Office of the Keys (confession and forgiveness). Please see the worship schedule for the dates and Scripture that will be addressed as we study Luther's Small Catechism.

As we change seasons this month we can also reflect upon the changing nature of our lives but thanks be to God for the unchanging love and grace of God in Christ and God's enduring Word that comforts and strengthens us. I am thankful for each of you as we face these anxious times together and for your friendship and faith that encourages me and builds up our community of faith.

*May God bless you and keep you as we walk with Christ
and one another in faith and love, Pastor Doug Hefner*

October 2025 Worship Schedule and Pastor Doug's Sunday Sermon Schedule:
9:30am Sunday School and 10:30am Worship with Holy Communion

October 5, 2025 17th Sun after Pentecost, Luther's Small Catechism: The Ten Commandments Exodus 20:1-21, Romans 13:8-10, Galatians 5:13-15, Matthew 5:17-30. We will focus on the Ten Commandments from Exodus 20 and what Jesus taught in the Gospels. We will study what Luther wrote in the Small Catechism about the Ten Commandments. You may remember the familiar model as Luther asks of each

commandment, what does this mean? *For example, the First Commandment, You shall have no other gods. What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.*

October 12, 2025 18th Sun after Pentecost, Luther's Small Catechism: The Apostles' Creed. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, 12-26, John 3:13-21. Martin Luther had a reason for starting with the Ten Commandments in the Small Catechism. He started with the Law to show us our sinfulness and need for the forgiveness and salvation. Luther then moves to the Gospel, what God has done for us, as he reflects upon the truth of the Apostles' Creed. God the Father not only created us and provides for us, the Father sent His own Son Jesus to proclaim the gospel of grace and love that comes from Jesus' life, death and resurrection. God the Spirit brings people to faith and formed the Church to bring us together as the Communion of Saints.

October 19, 2025 19th Sun after Pentecost, Luther's Small Catechism: The Lord's Prayer. Isaiah 65:16-23, Matthew 6:5-13, and Luke 11:1-13. For Luther, the Ten Commandments gave us the Law and The Creed showed us the Gospel, then the Lord's Prayer is a prescription for the Christian life. First of all, it reminds us to call upon God's help in every aspect of our lives. The petitions likewise remind us of our calling in which we pray that God would help us: hallowed by Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done, etc. Martin Luther encouraged people to use the catechism as a prayer guide as well.

October 26, 2025, Reformation Sunday- The Means of Grace: God's Word, Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confession and the Office of the Keys Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 46; Romans 3:19-28; John 8:31-36. We will celebrate our rich Reformation history for this 508th Anniversary of the Reformation as we consider how we are called to boldly live out our faith in our time. We will celebrate our rich Reformation history as Lutherans and how the Church was reformed then, through the centuries, and how it is continually reformed today in God's Word. This is a great time to celebrate the truth of the Gospel, which is Jesus: "if the Son sets you free you will be free indeed."

November 2, 2025, All Saints' Sunday, Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 149; Ephesians 1:13-23; Matthew 5:1-12. We will remember our loved ones who have entered the Church Triumphant, the saints who are in heaven as we praise our Lord for the gift of their lives and eternal life. We will light a candle for each one and ring the church bell in thanksgiving for their lives. We will also give thanks that we are the saints on earth because of God's love for us in Christ.

WEDNESDAY EVENING VESPERS SERVICE 6:30pm SANCTUARY

In May and September we studied 1, 2, and 3 John, Jude, Philemon, and Titus during our Wednesday evening services. For October, as we celebrate the 508th anniversary of the Reformation, we are going to study the Five Solas (“alone”): **October 1 - Sola Scriptura – Scripture Alone; October 8 -Solus Christus – Christ Alone; October 15 – Sola Gratia – Grace Alone; October 22 – Sola Fide – Faith Alone; and October 29 – Soli Deo Gloria – To God Alone be the glory!** We will look at the Scripture that inspired Luther and the other Reformers as they proclaimed the Five Solas of the Reformation to reform the Church.

SUNDAY SCHOOL FOR OCTOBER

Please join us at 9:30am as we continue our Bible Study, “The Story.” The Story is a 31 Session overview of the Story of God’s Love in the 66 books of the Bible. We have just passed the part of the story where the Northern Kingdom (Israel) and Southern Kingdom (Judah) split. God sent messengers to both the Northern and Southern Kingdoms to call the people of God to repent and live as God’s holy people. Chapter 16 covers the fall of the Northern Kingdom (Israel) to the Assyrians in 722 BC. In Chapter 17 we will look at the fall of the Southern Kingdom (Judah) to the Babylonians in 587 BC. Then we will look at the books written about the exiles like Daniel (Chapter 18). In Chapter 19, we will look at the exiles return home. Chapter 20 is an overview of the Book of Esther and Ch. 21 is about Nehemiah and the rebuilding of the walls and homes.

Blessing of the Animals Service on October 12 at 5pm

The Blessing of the Animals Service normally falls on the Festival Day of St. Francis of Assisi, who is considered the patron saint of animals (Oct. 4). Due to the Hunger Walk on Oct. 5, Grace will have the service on Oct. 12. Please bring your pet or farm animal for a blessing. If you can’t bring your pet, please bring a picture and they will be blessed and prayed for at the service. If you have a pet that has died in the last number of years, we will remember the pets we have lost. Please bring a picture to share. We hope to have someone from the Catawba Humane Society to tell us about their work for pets in our county. We will also receive an offering that will go to CHS to help pets in our area. Please invite friends, family, and neighbors.

Trunk or Treat on October 26 5-7pm

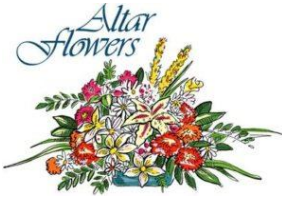
This is a Church-wide event; in other words, we need you to be a part of this. We need as many people as possible to open their car trunk or truck bed to decorate and hand out candy. Some decorate their trunks or have little games for the kids to play to get candy. After Trunk or Treat, we will have hot dogs, chips, and drink. We may also have the fire pit ready to do smores. We will see if we can get an inflatable to have fun with as well. If you would like to help with this event, please see the Youth and Family Ministry Team. We will have flyers made so that you can invite the community.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR OCTOBER

❖ Lector	Todd Childers
❖ Ushers	Chris Jarrett & Jack Parris
❖ Communion Assistants	Cindy Bivens & Lula Ingle
❖ Altar Preparation	Cindy Bivens
❖ Offering Tabulators	Todd Childers & Jason Yoder

*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 OCTOBER



10/5 Belinda Wilfong	10/12 OPEN
10/19 OPEN	10/26 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 SEPTEMBER

	8/31/25	9/7/25	9/14/25	9/21/25
Sunday School	8	14	11	6
Worship	32	42	40	58
General Fund Offerings	\$1,045	\$1,985	\$1,040	\$5,465

FRED T. FOARD SENIOR LUNCHEON will be held on Wednesday, October 1 at 12:00 noon here at Grace. All are invited!

THE GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST will be held on Saturday, October 11th 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!

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LEADERSHIP MINISTRY BOARD is scheduled for Monday, October 20th at 6:00 pm.

WORSHIP ASSISTANT VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED! - Please offer your services as a Lector, Usher, or Communion Assistant for the upcoming months. Worship Assistants help to make our worship experience more meaningful. If you would like to serve during a particular month, please notify Todd Childers.

ASHURE MINISTRY FOOD ASK for the month of October is hygiene items. We are doing great things at Grace in helping feed the hungry in our own community. Let's try to donate 2,000 pounds in 2025! That would be around 170 pounds per month. We can do it! Let's come together to help reach this goal! Year-to-date the disciples at Grace have donated 1037 pounds of food.

CCHUNGERWALK.COM

SPONSOR START A TEAM
RAISE SUPPORT WALK
SPREAD THE WORD

CATAWBA COUNTY

HUNGER WALK



REGISTER NOW

SUNDAY | 3PM
OCTOBER 5, 2025
DOWNTOWN NEWTON
(Frank & Sue Jones Amphitheatre)

BENEFITING

 **Ashure** MINISTRY

 **The Corner Table**

 **HICKORY** Soup KITCHENS

WHY WE WALK

To provide meals to the homes facing food insecurity in Catawba County!

INFORMATION

2:00PM - Registration 2:45PM - Awards

(Top Team Fundraiser, Largest Team, Top Individual Fundraiser and more)

QUESTIONS

Ashure Ministry
(828-465-1792 | ashureministry.org)

The Corner Table
(828-464-0355 | thecornertable.org)

Hickory Soup Kitchen
(828-327-4826 | hickorysoupkitchen.org)

Grace Notes

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