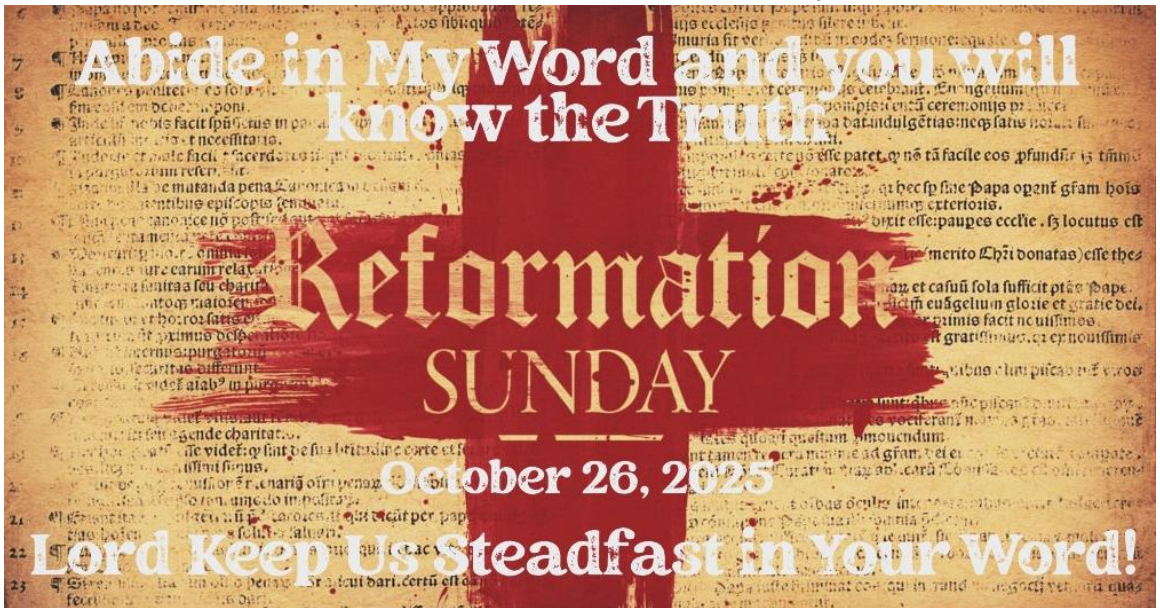


Reformation Sunday



October 26, 2025 10:30 AM

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway, Newton, North Carolina 28658

Church Office: (704) 462-1035 email: gracenalcnwton@aol.com

www.gracelutheran-newton.org

Rev. Doug Hefner cell: (980) 234-8848 email: pastorhefner@aol.com

Sandi Tallant – Organist Todd Childers – Administrative Assistant

Office Hours: Monday and Wednesday 9am to 1pm

Tuesday and Thursday 12pm to 4pm

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.

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

PRELUDE *Please observe silence for meditation and prayer.*

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*** BRIEF ORDER OF CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

The sign of the cross may be made by all in remembrance of their Baptism.

P: In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: Trusting in God's steadfast love, grace and forgiveness in Christ, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection and confession of our sins before God and one another.

P: Merciful Father,

C: we have sinned against You and one another. We do not fully live as Your beloved daughters and sons. We use Your gifts to our own ends and neglect your call to bear fruit in Your world. Look upon us in mercy and forgive us all our offenses, and cleanse us from proud thoughts and empty desires. By your grace draw us near to you, our refuge and our strength; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The minister stands and addresses the congregation.

P: God hears the cries of all who call out in need, and through our Lord's death and resurrection, Christ has defeated death and sin, reconciled us to God and one another, and made us his own beloved sons and daughters. Led by the Holy Spirit, who grants freedom and newness of life, let us rejoice in the Good News that God has granted us the

entire forgiveness of all our sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

C: Amen.

* **GATHERING HYMN** “A Mighty Fortress is Our God”

LBW 229

* **GREETING**

P: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **C: And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

O Lord God, heavenly Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon your faithful people. Keep them steadfast in your grace and truth, protect and comfort them in all temptation, defend them against all enemies of your Word, and bestow upon the Church your saving peace; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Jeremiah 31: 31-34

³¹ “Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, ³² not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD.³³ For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ³⁴ And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the LORD,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

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

PSALM 46

¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

²Therefore we will not fear though the earth gives way, though the mountains be moved into the heart of the sea,

³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble at its swelling.

⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High.

⁵God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God will help her when morning

dawns.

⁶The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts.

⁷The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord, how he has brought desolations on the earth.

⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire.

¹⁰“Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!”

¹¹The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress.

SECOND READING: Romans 8: 31-36

¹⁹Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. ²⁰For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. ²¹But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it — ²²the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: ²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, ²⁵whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God’s righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. ²⁶It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. ²⁷Then what becomes of our boasting? It is excluded. By what kind of law? By a law of works? No, but by the law of faith. ²⁸For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.

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

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** **“God’s Word is Our Great Heritage”** **LBW 239**

***GOSPEL: John 8: 31-36**

P: The holy gospel according to St. John. C: **Glory to you, O Lord.**

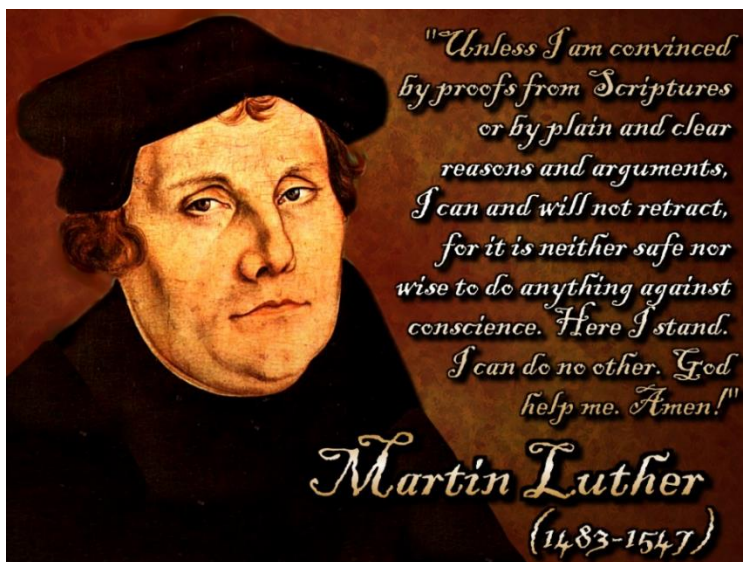
³¹Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³²and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” ³³They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?” ³⁴Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you,

everyone who practices sin is a slave to sin. ³⁵The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

L: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to You O Christ!**

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE



SERMON

**Luther’s Small Catechism
Sermon Series Part 4, The
Means of Grace: Word and
Sacrament**

*“Lord Keep Us Steadfast in
Your Word! – The
Reformation Continues With
Us”*

Pastor Doug Hefner

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “Lord, Keep Us Steadfast in Your Word”

LBW 230

***THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.

He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.

He descended into hell.

On the third day he rose again.

He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.



***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Response at the end of each petition. P: Lord in your mercy, C: Hear our prayer.

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. C: And also with you.

Worshipers may greet one another with "the Peace of Christ."

The assembly may be seated.

*** OFFERING** In response to God's blessings, we offer our tithes to the Lord
HOLY COMMUNION – MEAL OF GRACE

*** OFFERTORY** Let the Vineyards

Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the
hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence, and
give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: God of grace and glory, we rejoice in Your Son our Lord Jesus Christ, who came to us to bring the riches of your grace. As you have blessed us with your gifts of life and love, let them in our offering be blessing for others so that they may come to know the Truth that sets them free. As we gather at your table of grace, help us to rely upon grace alone through faith alone so that we may give you the glory alone, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **C: Amen.**

* **DIALOGUE AND PREFACE**

P: The Lord be with you. **C: And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts. **C: We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. **C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

* **HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

* **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

* **LORD'S PRAYER**

* **INVITATION TO COMMUNION**

P: The Gifts of God for the People of God. **C: Thanks be to God!**

The assembly may be seated.

All are invited to receive Holy Communion.

COMMUNION SONG

Lamb of God



The congregation is invited to stand.

* COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER

P: Let us pray. O God, our refuge and our strength, we give you thanks for sustaining us with the body and blood of your Son who is the Bread of life. Fed and nourished in Christ, may your Holy Spirit enliven us to be his body in the world, that we will give you praise and serve your earth and its many peoples, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

* BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. Amen.

***SENDING HYMN "Built on a Rock the Church Shall Stand"**

LBW 365

*DISMISSAL

P: As disciples of our Lord Jesus, let us abide in God's Word so that we will know Jesus, the Truth that sets us free! As we go forth in peace and joy, let us share the Good News that we are saved by grace through faith as we love God and our neighbor. **C:**
Thanks be to God!

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God by Pastor Doug, Gabby and Matthew Hefner in loving memory of Elizabeth Hefner who was baptized on this date at a County Wide Reformation Service at Newberry College and in thanksgiving to the Grace Church family for their partnership in the Gospel and their support and love of our family in the past year (Nov. 1 is one year anniversary).



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffry Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Glenda Childers, Pat Dietz, Lisa Childers Fox, Allen and Kay Hatchett, Larry Heavner, Lorene Heavner, Larry & Brenda Jarrett, Martha Johnson, Faye Lane, Harvey Leatherman, Phil &

Malinda Leatherman, Tim Leatherman, Betty Matheson, Joe Momier, Jane Moss, Christine Norman, Michael Norman, Tricia and Dan Panek, Mike, Debi & Stephen Pisko, Jennifer Bivens Skott, Helen Smith, Ethan Starnes, Sandi Tallant, Libby Travis, Shirley Warlick, Ken & Tirzah Welch, Scott & Carolyn Whisnant, Nancy Willis, and Martha Young.

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, Terry Barnett, David Baucom, Ashlee Bumgardner, Jessica Cassels & Family, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, Elizabeth Frye, family of Barbara Jarrett, Thurman McCaslin, Ryan McMullen, Randy & Rita Neill, Eric Phillips, Wayne & Brenda Reed, Anita Sabino, and Scott Speagle. Prayers for world peace and for our church, the United States of America, 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

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: Reformation Sunday

9:30am – Sunday School 10:30am - Worship Celebration

5:00pm to 7:00pm – Trunk or Treat Event

Wednesday 6:30pm – Vespers with Bible Study on the Five Solas – Sola Deo Gloria
(To God Alone Be Glory)

HAPPY OCTOBER BIRTHDAY TO:

October 25 – Matt Speagle October 28 – Todd Setzer

UPCOMING EVENTS

October 26 Reformation Sunday

October 26 Trunk or Treat Outreach Event with Hot Dogs for Community 5-7pm

See Pastor Doug if you would like to help; everyone is encouraged to participate so that we can reach out to our community with the love of Jesus.

October 26 Ordering for Christmas Poinsettias begins.

November 2 All Saints Day Service – we will remember and give thanks for all the Saints, especially those members who have died in the past year and are now with the Lord.

November 2 Annual Congregational Meeting

November 16 –Deadline for Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes

November 23 Sunday Thanksgiving Service at Grace

November 23 Deadline to order Christmas Poinsettias.

November 26 Community Thanksgiving Service at Plateau, Dinner at 6:00 pm; Worship at 7:00 pm. Grace will be providing desserts.

November 29 Hanging of the Greens 10:00 am

November 30 First Sunday of Advent

December 3, 10, 17 Midweek Advent Services 6:30 pm

December 13 Wreaths Across America at 11:00 am at Union Church

December 24 (Wed.) Christmas Eve – Candlelight & Holy Communion 7:00 pm

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS:

Order forms for Christmas poinsettias and a special offering envelope are available today. Please place your order form along with payment inside the special envelope and give it to the ushers. Use the special envelope for the date that you place your poinsettia order and designate how much of your offering is for poinsettias, the general fund, the building fund, etc. If you are not ordering poinsettias please just use your regular offering envelopes. The cost for each plant is \$12.00 and the deadline for ordering is Sunday, November 23.

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.

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME ENDS at 2:00 AM, Sunday, November 2. Be sure to turn your clocks BACK on hour before going to bed Saturday night, November 1.

THE ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING will be Sunday, November 2, after worship as prescribed by the Constitution. The purpose of the meeting is to elect members to the Leadership Ministry Board and approve the 2026 Spending Plan. Board members Rick Bivens, Sheila Drum, and Jason Yoder are seeking reelection to the Board. Also, we are seeking to fill 1 unexpired term for a period of 1 year ending 12/31/26. If you would like to serve, or if you would like to nominate a fellow member, please submit the name to Tim Eckard, Board President, so the names can appear on the ballot. Make sure to get the permission of the person you are nominating to place their name in nomination.



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.



WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

Please join us on Saturday, December 13th at 11:00am to honor our veterans in the Grace Cemetery where their bodies have been laid to rest. No matter where they served or how, Wreaths Across America strives to ensure that no one is forgotten. The cost is \$20.00 per wreath. The deadline to order wreaths is Sunday, November 9th.

Please ask one of the ushers for an order form.

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace

Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard

Lector – Todd Childers Youth Leader – Stormy Shull

Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Lula Ingle

Ushers – Chris Jarrett & Jack Parris

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jason Yoder

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Reformation Sunday – October 26, 2025

“For we hold that one is justified by faith apart from works of the law.”

– Romans 3:28 –

Working Ourselves to Death

Have you ever thought about how our culture lifts up and praises workaholicism? We may say that we don't, but in fact, we demand so much from one another that in a subtle, covert way, we are indeed encouraging each other to work, work, work. It's no wonder that when it comes to basking in the grace of God, enjoying much needed sabbath, and simply allowing ourselves “to be,” many of us have a very difficult time.

St. Paul urged the Romans to recognize the source of their salvation — that we are saved by grace, apart from the law. There's nothing we can do to save ourselves, and yet we continue to try by our efforts to work, work, work ourselves into God's grace. The truth is that we don't want to give up power! Just like workaholicism is a soul-destroying obsession, so too are our attempts to work ourselves into God's good graces. Instead of sinking into God's loving and forgiving arms, we work ourselves to death trying to be good enough for God.

There's the paradox we wrestle with — am I good enough for God? Can I be better for Jesus? What can I do to make his sacrifice “worth it”? The answers are, “No, you aren't good on your own, and you can do ABSOLUTELY NOTHING!” But here is the grace (so don't despair): Jesus Christ came to this earth and took on our human form so that we would know that God knows what it's like to be fully human. And Jesus experienced all of human life — joyful emotions, friendships, family relationships, work, persecution, betrayal, and death. There is no part of our human experience that Jesus did not experience fully and completely. The inevitable sacrifice on the cross of Calvary and subsequent resurrection and ascension all point to his great love for us. He did all of this not because we are “worthy,” but because of his never-ending love for us.

This means that we do not have to work ourselves to death in an effort to win Christ's affection. We already have his love, and it is shown to us daily! The law brings death, but Christ put an end to the power of death so that we might live, and live fully, in the kingdom of God, here and now and forever