

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 11

NOVEMBER 2025

Saints of God, Count Your Blessings and Give Thanks!

Message from Pastor Doug Hefner

Psalm 30:3-4 O LORD, You brought my soul up from the grave; You have kept me alive, that I should not go down to the pit. Sing praise to the LORD, you saints of His, And give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name. Psalm 107:8 Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.

*Count your blessings, name them one by one,
Count your blessings, see what God hath done!
Count your blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

November is a month full of great reasons to give thanks to God, just as the hymn reminds us above to “count your blessings.” But giving thanks to God is not just for November; everyday is a day to “***thank the Lord for His steadfast love and wonderful works.***” Of course God’s Word reminds us that we can be thankful “***in all circumstances***” (1 Thessalonians 5:18 “***give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you***”), “***at all times***”, and “***for everything***” (Ephesians 5:20 “***giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.***”)

In the Bible the words thank, thanks, thanksgiving, and thankful appear over 170 times! In St. Paul’s letters alone, Paul uses these words 44 times! Paul is very thankful to God and to Christ and for the Church, the people God has redeemed who are now his fellow brothers and sisters in Christ, whom Paul refers to as the “**saints**” **almost 60 times**. I am thankful for each of you and for the ways we have been blessed at Grace Lutheran Church to be the

saints of God. I thank God for the blessing of serving as your pastor as we begin our second year together.

On **All Saints Sunday on November 2,** we will celebrate God's gift of love in Christ that sets us apart and welcomes us as God's family. In Christ we are made **saints of God** (saint means "holy one" or "set apart one"). We are welcomed into the communion of saints, the Church, which includes those in heaven and on earth. We will remember with thanksgiving the precious saints in our lives who now rest from their labors and have entered the Church Triumphant. We will light a candle and ring a bell to remember *these saints who have blessed us and fill heaven now with thanksgiving.*

God's family is both on earth and in heaven and we will remember and give thanks for the precious saints who have entered the **Church Triumphant**. These saints have blessed us in many ways as their lives and witness serve as an example for us. At the All Saints Service we will remember those who have died and entered the Church Triumphant since last year's service. While we miss them and grieve their loss, may we also find comfort and hope in our Lord who loves us and is the Resurrection and the Life. We remember with thanksgiving the following saints who now rest from their labors:

Irene Heavner 01/17/25

Herb Travis 03/18/25

Jack Hefner 08/08/25

Elizabeth Hefner 12/14/24

We will light a candle to remember *the light of God that shines in each of these saints.* A bell will also be rung in thanksgiving and remembrance. Also to be remembered will be the many family members and friends of our congregation who have also entered the Church Triumphant. You will be invited to speak these names in the service as we remember and give thanks for their lives. The service will be a beautiful way to remember and give thanks for these dear saints. It will also be a time for healing and comfort we remember that God loves and has overcome sin and death in Christ Jesus our Lord. The service will also remind us that we are the saints of God on earth and are called to let the light of Christ shine through us, our lives and good works to glorify God.

On **Sunday, November 9** we will remember and give thanks for our veterans who have served and sacrificed so much on our behalf. We will have a gift for our veterans to show our appreciation.

Sunday, November 16 will be a Thanksgiving Service. Even though Thanksgiving is Nov. 27 we will get ready for it with a service of Thanksgiving. Our worship will include

the great thanksgiving hymns: Now Thank We All Our God, We Gather Together, and Come Ye Thankful People Come. As we gather to worship we “Now Thank we all our God with hearts, and hands and voices Who wondrous things has done, In whom this world rejoices.”

Sunday, Nov 23 is Christ the King Sunday and it is the last Sunday in the Church Liturgical year reminding us that Christ is the fulfillment of time and all things. We give thanks to God for Christ’s merciful, loving and gracious reign of the Kingdom of God.

Wednesday, November 26 is our Community Thanksgiving Meal and Service which will be held at Plateau. Dinner is at 6pm; Worship at 7pm. Grace is in charge of bringing the desserts. Last year there were about 75 in attendance. If you can help with this, please see Pastor Doug.

We can also give thanks to God as we enter the season of Advent on Sunday, **November 30, the First Sunday of Advent**. Advent means “coming” and we celebrate and give thanks for the ways God comes to us – God came among us in Christ Jesus our Lord (incarnation); God continues to come unto us through the Holy Spirit and Word and Sacrament; and one day our Lord will come again to make all things new!

Saints of God at Grace, let us sing praise and give thanks for all of God’s wondrous works and gifts in Christ! As we share in the beautiful worship services of this month, I pray that you will know God’s love and lift a grateful song of praise and thanksgiving for God’s many blessings. Thank you all for the gifts, cards, and kind words during Pastor Appreciation Month in October. I am very blessed to serve as your pastor and thank God for each of you!

Happy and Blessed Thanksgiving To Everyone, Pastor Doug Hefner

Worship Schedule for November 2025 From Pastor Doug

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

November 2, 2025, All Saints’ Sunday, Revelation 21:1-7; Psalm 16; Colossians 1:1-14; Matthew 5:1-12 (see my letter for the theme of this service)

Nov 9, 2025 22nd Sun aft Pentecost Stewardship Sunday and Recognition of Veterans, Malachi 3:1-12; Psalm 98; 2 Corinthians 8:1-15; Luke 21:1-4 During this time of year when we are remembering how thankful we are for our blessings it is good to remember that God has called us to be stewards of all of our blessings. In thanksgiving to God we

give unto the Lord through our time, talent and treasure; we share with others our gifts, goods, and the Gospel! In the gospel Jesus is in the temple at the time of the offering and he lifts up as an example the great sacrifice of a poor widow. Jesus reminds us that we all have something to give to God in thanksgiving. We give thanks today for our veterans who have made and are making many sacrifices to serve and protect others. We will honor our Veterans in the service today and they will receive a gift of appreciation.

November 16, 2025, 23rd Sun aft Pentecost Thanksgiving Service 1 Chronicles 16:23-36, Psalm 107, Colossians 3:12-17, Luke 17:11-19. We will join our hearts and voices in worship as we lift up our praise and thanksgiving to God for God's love in Christ and the many blessings we have been given. We will sing the great hymns of Thanksgiving!

November 23, 2025 Christ the King Sunday, Malachi 3:13-18, Psalm 46, Colossians 1:13-20, Luke 23:27-43 In our gospel lesson Jesus is mockingly hailed as a king before he is crucified. A sign was also put above his head on the cross "King of the Jews" to also mock Jesus. And yet this passage reminds us why He is our King who would give up the riches and glory of heaven to enter into our sin and brokenness to deliver us. From the cross Jesus said, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." One of the thieves saw Jesus as the King and Savior and asked to be remembered in Jesus' Kingdom. The other thief failed to see the kingship and glory of the one who was dying for the world. May we always put our faith Jesus not only as our Savior, but also King and Lord!

November 30, 2025, First Sunday in Advent, Sunday of Hope, Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 22; Romans 13:[8-10] 11-14; Matthew 24:36-44. Advent means "coming" and during this season we remember that Jesus has come among us "Word made flesh", that He comes among us in Word and Sacrament and in the Holy Spirit's indwelling in the Church, and that Christ is coming again. We find our hope that one day Christ will make a new heaven and earth and that the faithful will be gathered together with Christ in His eternal Kingdom. Jesus calls us to be ready and watchful as we do not know the day or hour of Christ's coming again.

Wednesday Evening Vespers and Bible Study, Nov. 5, 12 and 19 – The Psalms!

The 150 Psalms in the Bible are some of the most beloved Scripture for God's people. The Psalms have been called the Prayer Book and the Hymn Book for our Faith Journey. In the Psalms God has provided comfort, peace, strength and hope for every part of our journey. Did you know that there are 9 distinct types of Psalms? We will learn about each type and

reflect on some of the Psalms in each group. We will cover 3 types of Psalms on the 3 nights of this series. Here are the Types of Psalms we will cover:

1. **Hymns or Songs of Praise** Example: Psalm 8, which begins, “O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!”.
2. **Laments** express distress, grief, or an urgent plea for God’s intervention. Example: Psalm 13, where the psalmist asks, “How long, O LORD? Will You forget me forever?”
3. **Thanksgiving Psalms** Example: Psalm 100 with its joyful exhortation, “Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth”.
4. **Royal or Enthronement Psalms** describe the king from Israel’s perspective and often highlight God’s covenant with David’s line. They reflect earthly kingship while pointing to the ultimate reign of God. Some are also linked with coronation rites or national celebrations.
Example: Psalm 2, urging nations to serve the LORD and recognize His Anointed One.
5. **Wisdom Psalms** Example: Psalm 1 opens with, “Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the way of sinners...”.
6. **Messianic Psalms** - Messianic psalms foreshadow a future anointed king and Savior. These texts often depict suffering, victory, and eternal rulership, pointing to a fulfillment beyond an immediate historical context. Referenced frequently in the New Testament, they find ultimate fulfillment in Christ’s redemptive work. Example: Psalm 22, (“My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?”).
7. **Imprecatory Psalms** Imprecatory psalms are pleas for divine justice against the wicked. They express a passionate desire for God to act righteously by confronting evil, reflecting the psalmist’s conviction that God alone brings vengeance. Example: Psalm 69
8. **Penitential Psalms** articulate sorrow for sin and beg God for mercy. Example: Psalm 51, David’s confession (“Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your loving devotion...”).
9. **Songs of Ascent** Psalms 120-134 bear the title “A Song of Ascents” in many Bible translations. These were likely sung by worshipers journeying to Jerusalem for festivals, symbolically “ascending” to the holy city and, by extension, drawing near the LORD. Example: Psalm 121: “I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come?”

Sunday School Bible Study, Sundays at 9:30am

In November we will continue our study of The Story, which is an overview study of the Bible. We should wrap up the Old Testament by Nov 23. Starting on November 30 we will

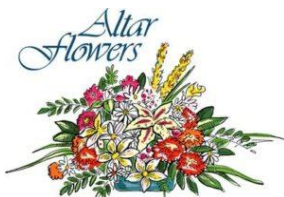
switch gears and have a 5-week Advent Bible Study to be announced soon. Everyone enjoyed Journey to Bethlehem last year which was filmed and taught from the Holy Lands. Pastor Adam Hamilton has other Advent Bible Studies that are inspirational and well done.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR NOVEMBER

❖ Lector	Stormy Shull
❖ Ushers	James Hall & Jack Wilfong
❖ Communion Assistants	Cindy Bivens & Shelly Scronce
❖ Altar Preparation	Cindy Bivens
❖ Offering Tabulators	Todd Childers & Sheila Drum

*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 NOVEMBER



11/2	Belinda Wilfong	11/9	OPEN
11/16	OPEN	11/23	OPEN
11/30	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 OCTOBER

	9/28/25	10/5/25	10/12/25	10/19/25
Sunday School	18	10	11	6
Worship	41	42	48	21
General Fund Offerings	\$1,475	\$4,570	\$2,205	\$1,875

FRED T. FOARD SENIOR LUNCHEON will be held on Wednesday, November 5 at 12:00 noon here at Plateau Community Church. All are invited!

THE GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST will be held on Saturday, November 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!

THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LEADERSHIP MINISTRY BOARD is scheduled for Monday, November 17th 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 November is flour, cornmeal, or sugar. 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 1,192 pounds of food.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

Grace Notes

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