

# Grace Notes



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

email: [gracenalcnewton@aol.com](mailto:gracenalcnewton@aol.com)

website: [www.gracelutheran-newton.org](http://www.gracelutheran-newton.org)

Church Office: 704-462-1035

Pastor Doug: (980)234-8848 [pastorhefner@aol.com](mailto:pastorhefner@aol.com)

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

**Volume 228, Number 4**

**APRIL 2025**

## ***Because He Lives We Can...***

### ***An Easter Message from Pastor Doug Hefner***

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! At Easter we celebrate the very heart of the gospel, the good news, which is that God so loved the world that God sent his Son Jesus who suffered and died for us on the cross and after three days in the grave, He rose victoriously over sin, death, and the devil. On Easter Sunday I will begin a new sermon series for the season of Easter entitled, ***"Because He Lives..."*** You will recognize this as a line from one of our favorite hymns, "Because He Lives" by Bill and Gloria Gaither. The words of the hymn remind us that because Christ lives, we can face tomorrow, we can have new faith and courage, we can have assurance and joy, and we can have hope for new and eternal life.

- 1. God sent His son, they called Him, Jesus; He came to love, heal and forgive;  
He lived and died to buy my pardon, An empty grave is there to prove my Savior lives!  
(Chorus) Because He lives, I can face tomorrow, Because He lives, all fear is gone;  
Because I know He holds the future, And life is worth the living, Just because He lives!***
- 2. How sweet to hold a newborn baby, And feel the pride and joy he gives;  
But greater still the calm assurance: This child can face uncertain days because He Lives!***
- 3. And then one day, I'll cross the river, I'll fight life's fi-nal war with pain;  
And then, as death gives way to vict'ry, I'll see the lights of glory and I'll know He lives!***

The Story behind the hymn: Bill and Gloria Gaither wrote this hymn in the turbulent decade of the 1960's. During this time President Kennedy, Senator Kennedy, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr were assassinated, the US was in the midst of the Vietnam War, and there was great racial tension as the country was struggling with issues of civil rights. Bill and Gloria Gaither were also going through their own struggles as well. And with the birth of their third child on the way, they were concerned about the world that they and their

children would be facing. In a time of prayer, they realized that Christ's victory over sin and death makes all of the difference as we place our lives and faith in Christ in "uncertain" times. "Because He Lives" then became a statement of faith, a solid foundation on which they would stand. I would say that 2025 is not all that different from the uncertain times of the late 1960's and early 1970's. We face uncertainty and adversity locally, nationally and globally. When we add in our own personal struggles and concerns, sometimes things can seem so overwhelming. That's why the Good News of our Lord's resurrection is so powerful, wonderful, and life-changing! May this song and the Good News of Easter encourage you in these turbulent times.

***Because He Lives I Can... How would you finish that line?*** Because He lives I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me! Because He lives I can be forgiven and forgiving! Because He lives I can experience peace and joy! Because He lives I Can Enjoy Abundant and Eternal Life! I will be exploring what God's Word teaches us about the Good News of our Lord's Resurrection as I encourage you to answer that question, "Because He Lives I Can..." Please take a look at the sermon series to see a guide for our reflection during the season of Easter. I pray that you will be present in worship and invite others as we hear the good news that "Because He Lives We Can..." As always I am humbled and grateful to be able to serve as your pastor. I would like to thank the congregation for your faithfulness and dedication to the Lord and His Church in the way that you serve here at Grace! My family and I wish you a Blessed Easter. I hope that you will experience again the Amazing Grace and Love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord who rose victoriously for us to give us new life. He is risen! He is risen indeed!

***Blessings and Peace to you in the name of our risen Lord Jesus, Pastor Doug***

### ***Prepare Your Hearts for Holy Week***

**April 6, 2025 Fifth Sunday in Lent** Isaiah 43:16-21; Psalm 126; Philippians 3:[4b-7] 8-14; John 2:13-23. Jesus cleansed or cleared the temple at the beginning of his ministry (John 2) and during his last week (Mark 11, Matthew 21, Luke 19). In John's account we have more detail about what Jesus did and why. Jesus cleared the temple of the animal sellers and money changers saying, "Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" When the "authorities" questioned Jesus' authority by demanding a sign, Jesus says, "Destroy this temple and I will raise it again in three days." Jesus is connecting the cleansing of the Temple with His death and resurrection, the New Temple or focus of worship.

**April 13, 2025 Palm/Passion Sunday, Holy Communion** John 12:12-19; Deuteronomy 32:36-39; Psalm 118:19-29; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 22:1- 23:56 At this service we will have the procession of the palms and a dramatic reading of Jesus' passion from the Gospel of St. Luke.

**Thursday, April 17, 2025 Maundy Thursday, 6:30pm, Holy Communion**

On this night in which Jesus is betrayed, He shared the Passover meal with his disciples. He instituted the Lord's Supper and gave this meal a new meaning through his sacrificial death on the cross (lamb) and resurrection. After supper Jesus washed the disciples feet showing them that the way we live in Jesus' love is to serve one another in love. Jesus gave them a new commandment (Maundy): "Love one another as I have loved you."

**Friday, April 18, 2025 Good Tenebrae Friday Service, 6:30pm** Through Scripture, Prayer, Song, and Reflection we will remember and give thanks for Christ's passion and sacrifice of love for us on the cross. We will meditate upon Jesus Seven Last(ing) Loving Words from the Cross, which are expressions of His love for us. Tenebrae is Latin for service of "darkness" or "shadows" – we will extinguish a candle as we reflect upon each of Jesus Loving Words from the cross.

***"Because He Lives We Can..."***

**April 20, 2025 Easter Sunday – The Resurrection of our Lord, "Because He Lives We Can Enjoy New Life!"**

***Mark 16, Luke 24:13-49, 1 Corinthians 15, Acts 10:34-43*** In these passages the disciples are filled with despair, doubt, and discouragement but find new life as they experience the resurrection of the Lord!

**7am Sunrise Service Holy Communion; 8am Breakfast; 9am Sun School, 10:30am Easter Service Holy Communion**

**April 27 2016 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun of Easter: "Because He Lives We Can Experience and Share God's Peace and Forgiveness"** *John 20:19-31*, Locked behind closes doors in fear, the disciples experience the peace of God as the risen Lord appears to them and gives them His gift of peace. Jesus also breathes on them the Holy Spirit and sends them forth to proclaim the Good News of God's love and forgiveness of sin.

**May 4, 2016 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun of Easter, "Because He Lives We Can Experience and Share God's Love",**

***John 21:1-19***, Unsure of what to do the disciples returned to their life of fishing. Their nets and their hearts came up empty. The risen Lord appears, filling their nets and their

lives with love. Three times Peter is asked by Jesus, “Do you love me?” as Jesus calls Peter to tend and care for the flock of God, the Church.

**May 11, 2025 4<sup>th</sup> Sun of Easter: “Because He Lives We Have the Good Shepherd and His Abundant Life”** The gospel message for the day is from ***John 10***, where Jesus reminds us that he is the Good Shepherd, who gathers us into His family and watches over and cares for us so that we might have “life and have it abundantly.” This is also Mother’s Day – Happy Mother’s Day. Following the Good Shepherd, our mothers and godly women also lovingly shepherd their families.

### **Wednesday Night Worship During the Lenten Season**

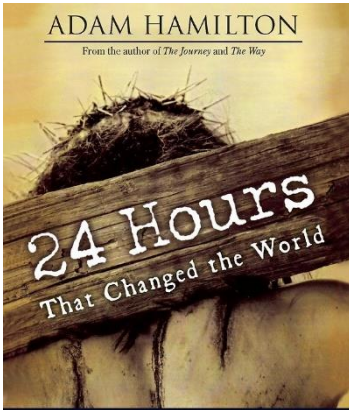
#### ***“Dinners with Jesus, Friend of Sinners”***

On Wednesdays during Lent (March 12, 19, 26, April 2, and April 9) you are invited to **Worship at 6:30pm in the Grace Union Church**. Our worship will include a Vespers service with Lenten/Evening hymns and a dramatic presentation of a person from encountered the great love of Christ on the way to the cross. We will hear the story of people who understood why Jesus was called “Friend of sinners”! As Jesus forgave sins, shared fellowship over food, and healed many he was given a label that he was proud to wear ***“Friend of sinners”*** (see Matthew 11).

Wednesday, April 2 – ***Dinner with Jesus in the Home of Zacchaeus Tax Collector, Luke 19***  
**New Event for Wednesday, April 9 – Celebrating a Christian Seder or Passover Meal with all the traditional foods.**

Throughout the Gospels we know that Jesus celebrated and participated in the worship festivals of His people, the Jews. The most important of these is the Passover. When we understand the elements of the Passover meal and its significance, we can even better appreciate and understand the beautiful and powerful meaning behind the events of the Last Supper and the blessing of Holy Communion. Seder means “order” in Hebrew. We will go through the order of worship for Passover while eating the traditional foods, singing the songs of faith, and praying the prayers. Pastor Doug will also make connections to the story of the Last Supper or the Lord’s Supper. You will enjoy the meal and gain a better appreciation of Passover, the Lord’s Supper, and Holy Communion! Since we need to know how many to prepare for, you will need to make reservations. All reservations are due by Friday, April 4. We also invite you to make a love offering for the meal to help defray the costs of the meal. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Doug.

***Mark your calendars now and invite family, friends, neighbors and coworkers!***

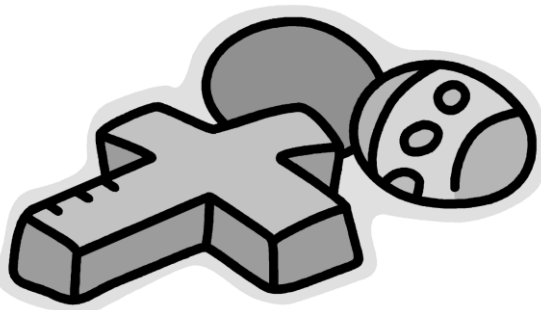


As we get closer to Holy Week and Easter we will journey with Jesus to the cross and empty tomb, using the study “24 Hours That Changed the World” which is filmed on location to give us a better understanding of the events and the Scripture that describe what Jesus went through for us in His last 24 hours. Here are the seven sessions:

*1 The Last Supper, 2 The Garden of Gethsemane, 3 Condemned by the Righteous, Session 4 Jesus, Barabbas, and Pilate, 5 The Torture and Humiliation of the King, 6 The Crucifixion, and 7 Christ the Victor.*

Pastor Doug would like to get a group of 10+ to go to the rock musical drama “**Jesus Christ Superstar**” which will be presented by the Hickory Community Theater April 4 – 19. This musical by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd Weber have wowed audiences now for 50 years! With the group rate, adult tickets are \$15 and youth and students \$9. Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30pm and Sundays at 2:30pm. Please let Pastor Doug know if you are interested.

**Grace Resurrection Celebration and Egg Hunt**  
**Palm Sunday, April 13, 4-6pm**



You and your family are invited to the Grace Resurrection Celebration and Egg Hunt. Make plans to enjoy fellowship, crafts, music, story time, hotdog supper and an egg hunt as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and the victory won for us in Christ! Bring your whole family; invite your friends. If you would like to help with this event please see Pastor

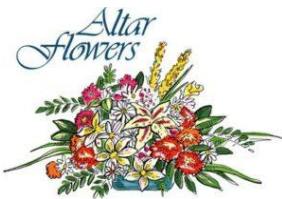
Doug. Also, we are putting together some flyers to share with your family, friends, and neighbors!

## WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR APRIL

✠ Lector	Tim Eckard
✠ Ushers	James Hall & Jacob Jarrett
✠ Communion Assistants	Sheila Drum & Cindy Bivens
✠ Altar Preparation	Rick & 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 APRIL



4/6	<b>LENT – NO FLOWERS</b>	4/20	<b>OPEN</b>
4/13	<b>LULA INGLE</b>	4/27	<b>OPEN</b>

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 MARCH

	3/2/25	3/9/25	3/16/25	3/23/25
Sunday School	10	9	11	11
Worship	45	37	43	53
General Fund Offerings	\$5,325	\$2,406	\$1,336	\$2,566

Needed Each Week = \$3,507

**General Fund Offerings, February 2025 = \$9,603**

**General Fund Expenses, February 2025 = \$15,246**

**Difference = -\$5,643 (expenses exceeded offerings)**

**ASHURE MINISTRY FOOD ASK** for the month of April is canned or dried beans. We are doing great things at Grace in helping feed the hungry in our own community. 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!

**FRED T. FOARD SENIOR LUNCHEON** will be held at **on Wednesday, April 2nd at 12:00 noon** at Blackburn Baptist Church. All are invited!

**Cleanup Day at Union Church and Fellowship Hall** is scheduled for Saturday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.

**THE GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST** will be held on **Saturday, April 12th 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, April 21st at 6:00 pm.**



The poster is a promotional graphic for an event. It features a dark blue background with white and orange text. On the left, there is a white box with the Ashure Ministry logo and a list of activities. On the right, there are images of food. The central text is large and bold, providing the event details.

**Ashure MINISTRY**

You Are Invited To A Special :

**Local Churches  
Lunch & Learn  
Event**



**MAY 13 12pm-1pm**

**245 East N Street Newton, NC**

[ashureministry.org/events](http://ashureministry.org/events)

We are inviting all churches in Catawba County to :

- ☒ Learn Ways to get involved
- ☒ Tour to see how God has been working
- ☒ Pray for those we minister to

**RSVP by May 5th**

# Grace Notes

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church NALC  
4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway  
Newton, NC 28658