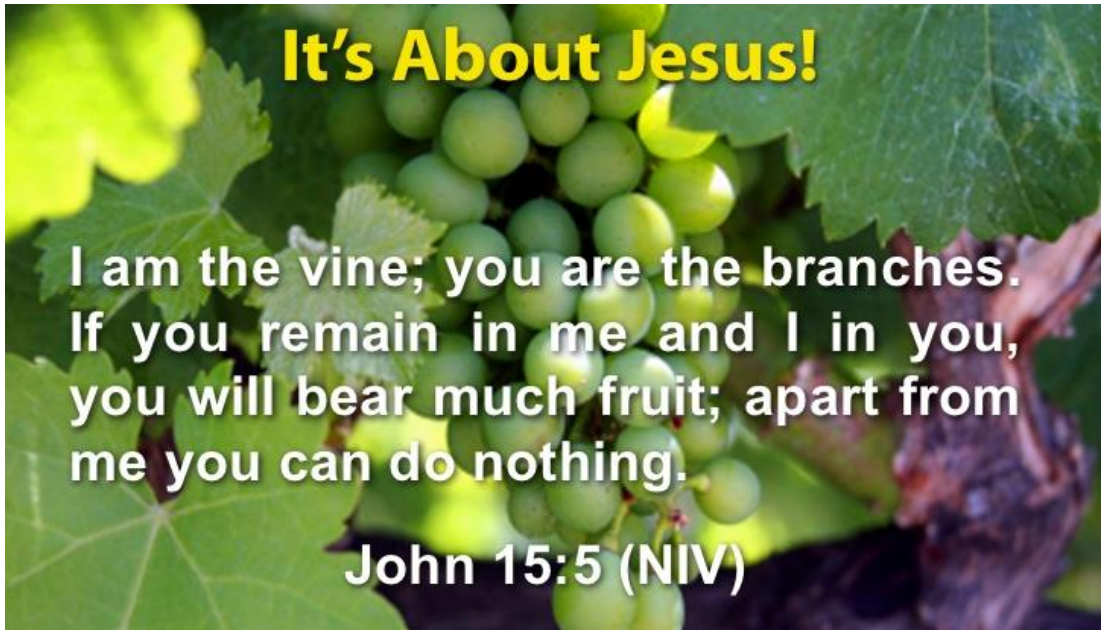


Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 25, 2025 10:30 AM



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



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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 CONFSSION 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: Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **C: Amen.**

P: If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God who is faithful and just will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (*1John1:9*) In the presence of God, who sees our hearts and our minds, who forgives all our sins, whose mercy endures forever, let us confess our sin.

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

P: Most merciful God,

C: we confess that we are in bondage to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God forgives us all our sins. As a called and ordained minister of the Church of Christ, and by his authority, I therefore declare to you the entire forgiveness of all your sins, in the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

*** GATHERING HYMN “Battle Hymn of the Republic”**

LBW 332

*** GREETING**

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen. **C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

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

P: O God, you make the minds of the faithful to be of one will. Grant that your people would love what you command and desire what you promise, that, among the manifold changes of this world, our hearts may be fixed where true joys are to be found; through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever **C:Amen.** *The congregation may be seated.*

FIRST READING: Acts 8:26-40

²⁶An angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” This is a desert place. ²⁷And he rose and went. And there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸and was returning, seated in his chariot, and he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹And the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over and join this chariot.” ³⁰So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. ³²Now the passage of the Scripture that he was reading was this: “Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent, so he opens not his mouth. ³³In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.” ³⁴And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶And as they were going along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “See, here is water! What prevents me from being baptized?” ³⁸And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. ³⁹And

when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord carried Philip away, and the eunuch saw him no more, and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he passed through he preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

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

PSALM 150

¹Praise the Lord! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens!

²**Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness!**

³Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!

⁴**Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!**

⁵Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!

⁶**Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord!**

SECOND READING: 1 John 4: 7-16

. ⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us. ¹³By this we know that we abide in him and he in us, because he has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. ¹⁶So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him.

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

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** GOSPEL ACCLAMATION** “Alleluia, Lord to Whom Shall We Go” LBW p. 62

***GOSPEL: John 15: 1-8**

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

¹{Jesus said,} “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. ²Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. ³Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to

you. ⁴Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples.” ⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. ¹⁰If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

¹²“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵No longer do I call you servants,^[a] for the servant does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all that I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. ¹⁶You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name, he may give it to you. ¹⁷These things I command you, so that you will love one another.

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE



SERMON

“Abiding in Jesus the True Vine and His Word Results in Abundant Fruitfulness”

Pastor Doug

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “Beautiful Savior”

LBW 518

***THE APOSTLES’ CREED**

LBW p. 65

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

LBW p. 65

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

LBW p. 66

*** OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: God of all creation, C: **all you have made is good, and your love endures forever.**

You bring forth bread from the earth and fruit from the vine. Nourish us with these gifts, that we might be for the world signs of your gracious presence

in Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

***DIALOGUE AND PREFACE**

LBW p. 68

*** HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

LBW p. 69

*** WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

LBW p. 70

*** LORD'S PRAYER**

LBW p. 71

*** 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

LBW p. 72

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: God of abundance, with this bread of life and cup of salvation C: **you have united us with Christ, making us one with all your people. Send us forth in the power of your Spirit, that we may proclaim your redeeming love to the world and continue forever in the risen life of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace. **Amen.**

*** SENDING HYMN** “Go My Children, With My Blessing”

WOV 721

* DISMISSAL

P: Connected to Christ the True Vine, let us go in peace and joy to bear the fruit of Christ's love for all the world. C: **Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God and in memory of all members of the Armed Forces who sacrificed their lives for our liberty by Todd and Susan Setzer.



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffrey Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Glenda Childers, Pat Dietz, Allen and Kay Hatchett, Larry Heavner, Lorene Heavner, Larry & Brenda Jarrett, Martha Johnson, Faye Lane, Phil & Malinda Leatherman, Tim Leatherman, Betty Matheson, Alexis McCrary, Joe

Momier, Jane Moss, Christine Norman, Tricia and Dan Panek, Michael, Debi & Stephen Pisko, Helen Smith, Ethan Starnes, Sandi Tallant, Libby Travis, Shirley Warlick, Ken & Tirzah Welch, Scott & Carolyn Whisnant, Nancy Willis, and Jack Wilfong.

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, Evelyn Childers, Betty Cansler D'Amico, Trey McCrary, Randy & Rita Neill, Scott Owens, Jon Pilkenton, Mel Raybourne, Kathy Rihani, Keith Steinback, Cheryl Thomas, Monica Thomas, Greyson Weaver, the family of Kelly Wesson, 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: Fifth Sunday of Easter

9:15am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

Tuesday: 6:30 pm – VBS Meeting

Saturday: 10:00am – VBS Decorating and Preparation (VBS June 1-5)

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL Vacation Bible School will take place at Grace from June 1st to June 5th. Other participating churches are Sardis Lutheran, Zion Lutheran, Old St. Paul's Lutheran, Wesley Chapel Methodist, and Plateau Community Church. Please reach out to the VBS team if you would like to participate. Adults, please know that you are also invited to participate in VBS. The pastors of the churches involved will be

leading Adult Bible Study each evening. Come out and meet these pastors and enjoy Bible Study with others from our community.

SOLID ROCK NALC DAY CAMP

Calling all children grades K- 5th... Day Camp is coming your way! Hosted by: Grace Lutheran Church and the Carolinas Mission Region Day Camp Team and Counselors

When: The week of Monday, June 16 – Friday, June 20.

9 am - 4 pm Monday-Thursday, 9 am- 12 noon Friday

Bible study, singing, games, crafts, skits, and lots of fun! Friends welcome!

Cost is only \$100 for a full week of growing in the faith, childcare and lots of fun! Ask your home church to help sponsor you! Don't let cost get in the way. We can find scholarships somewhere if you are interested! Contact Pastor Doug Hefner at Grace for more information and to register!

We now have 9 campers signed up already! The theme of the week is **People of Promise**. Day 1: Abraham, Genesis 15:1-6. Day 2: Jacob Genesis 28:10-22. Day 3: David 1 Samuel 16:1-13, 2 Samuel 7. Day 4: Mary and Joseph, Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:16-17. Day 5: Jesus, promised Messiah. Matthew 3:13-17. Grace will join the other churches involved with providing meals for the counselors during the week. The counselors will be staying at the parsonage. As we get closer to the week we will seek volunteers for the needs of the camp.

RIGHTNOW MEDIA

Don't forget to activate your free membership to RightNow Media, the world's largest streaming library of video Bible study resources. You should have received an email invitation for FREE access – if you haven't received it yet, be sure to check your spam or promotions folder. To get started, simply click the link in the email, create your free account, and start browsing more than 20,000 inspiring videos. We pray that RightNow Media will be a blessing to you and your family!

Visit <https://app.rightnowmedia.org/join/glcnc> OR text the code GLCNC to 49775.

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace

Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard

Lector – Stormy Shull Youth Leader – Stormy Shull

Altar Preparation – Rick & Cindy Bivens

Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Sheila Drum

Ushers – Wayne Powell & Jason Yoder

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jason Yoder