

Third Sunday After Pentecost

June 29, 2025 10:30 AM



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway, Newton, North Carolina 28658

Church Office: (704) 462-1035 email: gracenalcnewton@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 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 Gracious God,

C have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

P Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life in the name of the Father, +Son and Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

* **GATHERING HYMN** “My Country, ‘Tis of Thee”

LBW 566

* **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

P: Lord of all power and might, you are the author and giver of all good things. Graft into our hearts a love of your name. Increase in us true faith, nourish us with what is good, and watch over all who are in your care. Grant this, we pray, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 8:6-20

⁶ So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. ⁷ For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ “Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. ¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ ¹⁸ You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

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

PSALM 33: 8-12

- ⁸ Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!
- ⁹ **For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.**
- ¹⁰ The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.
- ¹¹ **The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.**
- ¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

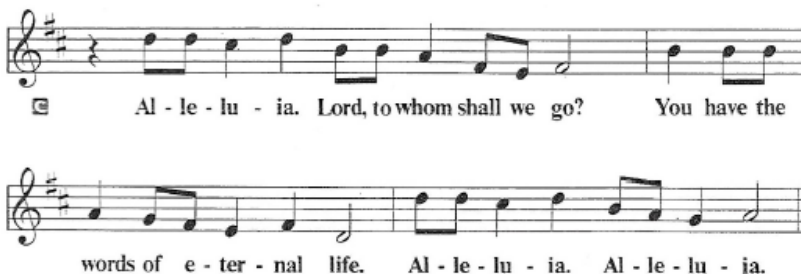
SECOND READING: Galatians 5:1, 13-17

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. ¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. ¹⁶Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

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"**



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

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

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

³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave [b] to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So 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

“Blessed is the Nation Whose God is the Lord: The Gift and Responsibility of Freedom!”
Pastor Doug

***God Bless America by Irving Berlin**

**God bless America, land that I love Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above**

**From the mountains to the prairies To the oceans white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home**

**From the mountains to the prairies To the oceans white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home God bless America, my home sweet home**

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “America, the Beautiful”

TCH 799



***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.**

Worshippers 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

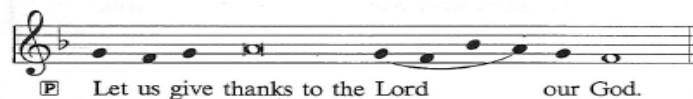
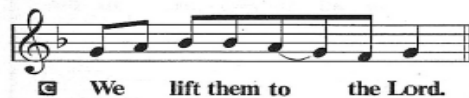
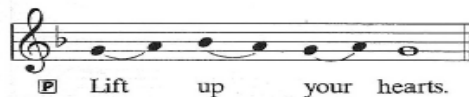
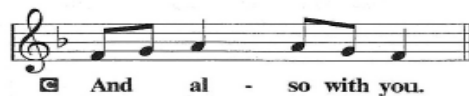
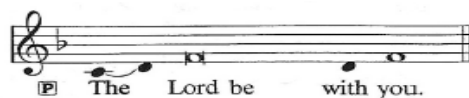
* **OFFERTORY** Let the Vineyards

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.

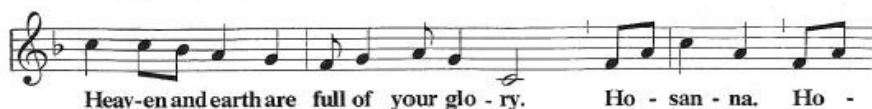
* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Merciful Father, C: we offer with joy and thanksgiving what you have first given us – ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of Him who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

*DIALOGUE AND PREFACE



*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



* **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: Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth and freedom this day and evermore, 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.

***DISMISSAL**

P: Christ has given us true freedom! Let us go in peace and joy to live in the gift of freedom and proclaim liberty in Christ by loving our neighbor. **C: Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Randall Childers by Glenda Childers.



In the Grace Church Family:

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

Momier, Jane Moss, Christine Norman, Michael Norman, Tricia and Dan Panek, Mike, 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, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, Reggie Harvell, Harrison Hefner, Lisa Honeycutt, Randy & Rita Neill, Anita Sabino, Jeffrey Smith, Karlee Speagle, Scott Speagle, Monica Thomas, 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: Second Sunday After Pentecost

9:30am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

Wednesday:

12:00pm – Fred T. Foard Seniors Luncheon – Sardis Lutheran Church

ANNOUNCEMENT: We now have Facebook! Look for **Grace Lutheran Newton NC** and become our friend. Please like us and share us with your other friends. Please send pictures or messages. This is your Facebook page.

The Story Bible Study: Finding Your Story in God's Love Story!

Join us for a new Bible Study that we will be using during our Sunday School time (9:30-10:15). The Bible is central to our faith but many people are intimidated by its scope and size. The Story gives us a way to journey from Genesis to Revelation together in 31 Bible Studies so everyone understands God's story and how their story intersects with it. It is true that God's Word, the Bible, is "The Greatest Story Ever Told" and it is an amazing story of God's love for us! Consisting of 31 chapters of carefully-selected Scriptures sequenced in chronological order, *The Story* presents the Word of God in an engaging format, reading like a novel. After all, it is the greatest story ever told! **Here are the 31 Chapters that help us to understand the overall story of God's Word: Old Testament: 1** Creation: The Beginning of Life as We Know It; **2** God Builds a Nation **3** Joseph: From Slave to Deputy Pharaoh; **4** Deliverance; **5** New Commands and a New Covenant, **6** Wandering; **7** The Battle Begins; **8** A Few Good Men and Women; **9** The Faith of a Foreign Woman; **10** Standing Tall, Falling Hard; **11** From Shepherd to King; **12** The Trials of a King; **13** The King Who Had It All; **14** A Kingdom Torn in Two; **15** God's Messengers; **16** The Beginning of the End (of the Kingdom of Israel); **17** The Kingdoms' Fall; **18** Daniel in Exile; **19** The Return Home; **20** The Queen of Beauty and Courage; **21** Rebuilding the Walls; **New Testament: 22** The Birth of the King; **23** Jesus' Ministry Begins; **24** No Ordinary Man **25** Jesus, the Son of God; **26** The Hour of Darkness; **27** The Resurrection; **28** New Beginnings **29** Paul's Mission; **30** Paul's Final Days; **31** The End of Time.

The participant's guide will be printed out each week for those attending. Pastor Doug will also send out the pdf of the whole guide to the congregation.

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 – Tricia Panek

Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Sheila Drum

Ushers – Jeff Scronce & James Hall

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Sheila Drum

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Third Sunday after Pentecost – June 29, 2025

⁵¹When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

⁵²And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. ⁵³But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. ⁵⁴And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, "Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" ⁵⁵But he turned and rebuked them."

- Luke 9:51-55 -

Given our choice, we would all prefer a doctor who treats the root cause of our disease to a doctor who merely manages the symptoms. In our gospel lesson, we see these same two options, albeit implicitly. On the one hand, Jesus knows that the time for him to be taken up has come. So, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. Why did he do this? Jesus did this because he was determined to attack the root cause of our sin by dying on the cross and rising from the dead.

On the other hand, Jesus' disciples viewed him as a conquering Messiah who would march to Jerusalem, throw the Romans out, and restore the kingdom to Israel. They also thought that Jesus was a prophet in the mold of Elijah (Luke 9:19), the very prophet who had called down fire from heaven to destroy his enemies (2 Kings 1). This is why they proposed calling fire down from heaven to consume the Samaritans when these Samaritans refused to receive them. So, if the disciples had had their way, Jesus would have used his power to throw the Romans out while incinerating a few Samaritans in the process. However, this would merely have managed certain symptoms of sin while leaving the root cause intact.

Fortunately, Jesus' vision prevailed. He went to Jerusalem and died on the cross to eliminate the guilt of our sin. Then he rose from the grave to break the power of our sin. On Pentecost, he poured out the Holy Spirit upon the Church to eliminate the pollution of our sin. And ultimately, in the final resurrection, he will eliminate all the effects of our sin. In Jesus, therefore, we have a doctor who attacks the root cause of our sin. But in so doing, he eventually eliminates all the symptoms of our sin as well.