

Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

July 13, 2025 10:30 AM



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway, Newton, North Carolina 28658

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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 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: Heavenly Father, merciful and holy, in you we live and move and have our being. Look upon us, your children, the work of your hands. 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 and renew us in the power of your Holy Spirit; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

C: Amen.

P: God's love, grace, and mercy invite us to return to the Lord. Let us confess our sins as we trust in the promise of our Lord and Savior to forgive and renew us in His love.

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

P: Ever faithful and merciful God, C: have mercy on us. We confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We turn from your loving embrace and go our own ways. We pass judgment on one another before examining ourselves. We too often neglect our calling to love our neighbor and proclaim your gift of salvation in word and deed. Give us humility and renew our hearts with your grace and love as you bring us to life again in you through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. 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.**

* **GATHERING HYMN** "O Day of Rest and Gladness"

LBW 251

* **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: God of mercy, when this world seems overrun by the evil that surrounds us, remind us that your Son, Jesus, has conquered evil and death and triumphed over all. Help us to confront the evil that can reside within us and turn it over to your transformative grace and mercy; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 5: 20-24

²⁰ Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! ²¹ Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, and shrewd in their own sight! ²² Woe to those who are heroes at drinking wine, and valiant men in mixing strong drink, ²³ who acquit the guilty for a bribe, and deprive the innocent of his right! ²⁴ Therefore, as the tongue of fire devours the stubble, and as dry grass sinks down in the flame, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom go up like dust; for they have rejected the law of the Lord of hosts, and have despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.

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

PSALM 119: 57-64

⁵⁷You only are my portion, O LORD;
I have promised to keep your words.

⁵⁸**I entreat you with all my heart,
be merciful to me according to your promise.**

⁵⁹I have considered my ways

and turned my feet toward your decrees.

**⁶⁰I hasten and do not tarry
to keep your commandments.**

⁶¹Though the cords of the wicked entangle me,
I do not forget your law.

**⁶²At midnight I will rise to give you thanks,
because of your righteous judgments.**

⁶³I am a companion of all who fear you
and of those who keep your commandments.

**⁶⁴The earth, O LORD, is full of your love;
instruct me in your statutes.**

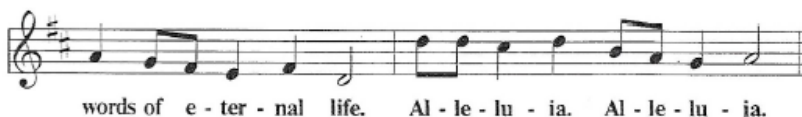
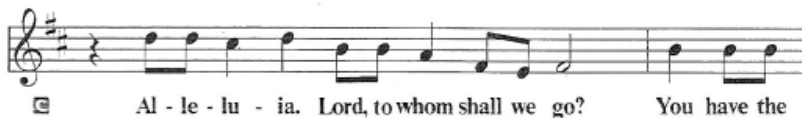
SECOND READING: Romans 12: 9-21

⁹ Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. ¹⁰ Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. ¹¹ Do not be slothful in zeal, be fervent in spirit,^[g] serve the Lord. ¹² Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. ¹³ Contribute to the needs of the saints and seek to show hospitality. ¹⁴ Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. ¹⁵ Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. ¹⁶ Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly.^[h] Never be wise in your own sight. ¹⁷ Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. ¹⁸ If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. ¹⁹ Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it^[i] to the wrath of God, for it is written, “Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.” ²⁰ To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

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: Matthew 13: 24-32, 36-43**

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

²⁴Jesus put another parable before {the disciples}, saying, “The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, ²⁵but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. ²⁷And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, ‘Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? How then does it have weeds?’ ²⁸He said to them, ‘An enemy has done this.’ So the servants said to him, ‘Then do you want us to go and gather them?’ ²⁹But he said, ‘No, lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both grow together until the harvest, and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, “Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.” ³¹He put another parable before them, saying, “The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. ³²It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.” ³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples came to him, saying, “Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field.” ³⁷He answered, “The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man. ³⁸The field is the world, and the good seed is the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are gathered and burned with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will gather out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all law-breakers, ⁴²and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. He who has ears, let him hear.”

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE



SERMON

“Jesus’ Parable on the Wheat and the Weeds: The Sowing of the Good Seed and Bad, the Struggle of Good and Evil, and the Separation of the Harvest at the End of the Age”

Pastor Doug

***HYMN OF THE DAY “Sing to the Lord of Harvest”**
Alt Tune: Aurelia (The Church’s One Foundation)

LBW 412

***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

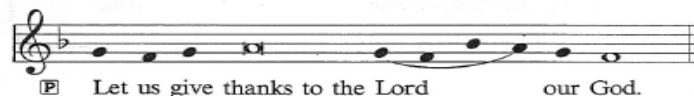
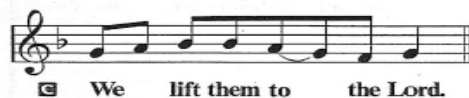
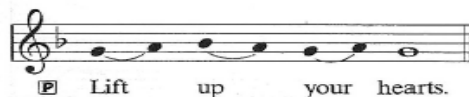
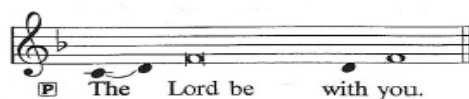
* **OFFERTORY** Let the Vineyards

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.

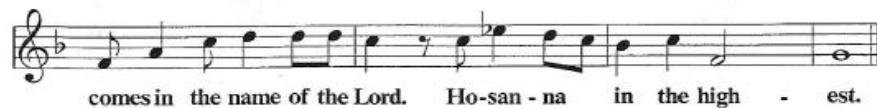
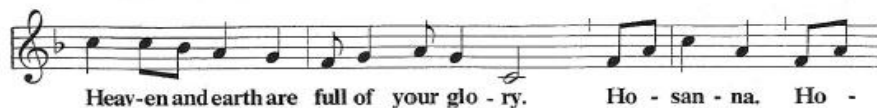
* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: God of abundance, C: we bring before you the precious fruits of your creation, and with them our very lives. Teach us patience and hope as we follow you and live faithfully in Your Kingdom. Nourish us at Your table with Your presence and assure us of Your great harvest in the coming again of your Son, our Savior and 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 musical notation is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; grant us peace." The melody is simple and hymn-like, with a final cadence on the last staff.

The congregation is invited to stand.

* **COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: Lord of the harvest, pour out upon us the spirit of your love and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with the true Bread from heaven. Nourished in faith, help us to shine like the Son as we display Your glory through Jesus Christ our 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.

*SENDING HYMN "He Leadeth Me: Oh, Blessed Thought!"

LBW 501

***DISMISSAL**

P: The Lord of the harvest will gather His people so that we will shine like the sun in the Kingdom of God. Let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord and our neighbor.

C: Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God and in honor of her children's birthdays (Conley Smith, Jr., Terry Smith, and Trudy Hoyle) by Helen Smith.



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), Dan Panek (Trinity Ridge)

Friends and Relatives in our Prayers: Pray for Peace in Israel and the World, New Covenant Lutheran Mission Church, Bobby Aderholdt, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, Harrison Hefner, Lisa Honeycutt, Thurman McCaslin, Randy & Rita Neill, Mel Raybourne, 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: Fifth Sunday After Pentecost

9:30am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY TO:

July 13 – Frankie Crouse, Lorene Heavner

July 18 – Emily Sipe

July 20 – Michael Scronce

July 22 – Nicky Jarrett, Scott Whisnant

July 24 – Sherry Biggerstaff

July 27 – Jack Wilfong

July 28 – Harvey Leatherman

July 30 – Shirley Warlick

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.

Summer Sermon Series on the Parables of Jesus:

July 13 – More Seeds! The Wheat and the Tares, The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:24-43) – “In the Hands of God, the Small Become Great”

July 20 – Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37) “Taking Care of (Kingdom) Business!”

July 27 - Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12)/Parable the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16) “Bigger Barns or Bigger Hearts?”

August 3 – Parables of Persistent Widow, Friend in Need at Midnight “Living on a Prayer!” Luke 18: 2-8, Luke 11: 5-8

August 10 – Parables of the Lowest Seat, Pharisee and Publican “O Lord it’s Hard to be Humble” Luke 14: 7-14, Luke 18: 10-14

August 17 – Parable of the Great Dinner, Invitation, Luke 14:15-24, Wedding Feast Matthew 22:2-14

August 24 - Back to School Blessing of the Bookbags, Parables about wise living: The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids Matthew 25:1-13 and the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)

August 31 – Parables about the Coming of Christ – Parable of The Faithful and Unfaithful Servants as They Await The Masters Return (Matthew 24:45-51) and the Parable of the Sheep and Goats (Matthew 25:31-46)

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.

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace

Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard

Lector – Tim Eckard Youth Leader – Stormy Shull

Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens

Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Sheila Drum

Ushers – Tim Leatherman and Chris Jarrett

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jason Yoder

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Fifth Sunday after Pentecost

“The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

Matthew 13: 24b-25

In this parable Jesus describes the Kingdom of God as a wheat field which a farmer has planted and into which an enemy has sown tares. Although the farmer’s servants want to pluck out the tares, he tells them not to, lest they pull up the wheat along with the tares. Instead, he tells them to let the wheat and tares grow together until the harvest, at which time he will separate the tares from the wheat and burn them.

The point of the parable is that the Kingdom of God currently consists of a mixture of Christians and non-Christians. However, when Christ returns, the non-Christians will be separated from the Christians, judged, and removed. Moreover, from elsewhere in Scripture, we know that God’s Kingdom will then come in its fullness with the entire creation being renewed. Thus, the fullness of God’s Kingdom, the New Creation, and the final removal of the non-Christians all coincide.

But this leaves the question of what we are supposed to do in the meantime. Should we just wait passively for the end? This would make no sense. We live between the penetrating victory of Christ’s first coming and the sweeping victory of his second coming. During this time, we are called to be salt and light (see Matt. 5:13-16) and to occupy until he comes (see Lk. 19:13). Yet, we don’t know how the proportion of wheat and tares will vary over time. When Christ returns, will there be a wheat field with a minority of tares or a tare field with a minority of wheat?

However, in light of Christ’s past and future victory and in light of his command to occupy, we engage the world in hope. And we do so precisely by being the wheat that He has called us to be, growing, bearing fruit, and displacing the tares *organically*. Of course, if we yank out the tares *mechanically*, we will damage the wheat around them. However, if we keep on bearing fruit, we may not only displace many tares, but even convert others to wheat! After all, since God’s Spirit works through his word (see Heb. 4:12), the pointed application of God’s word will soften some hearts while hardening others. Thus, some of the tares will convert; others will simply leave, and still others will choose to remain unconverted in the field. With these last we must patiently bear.