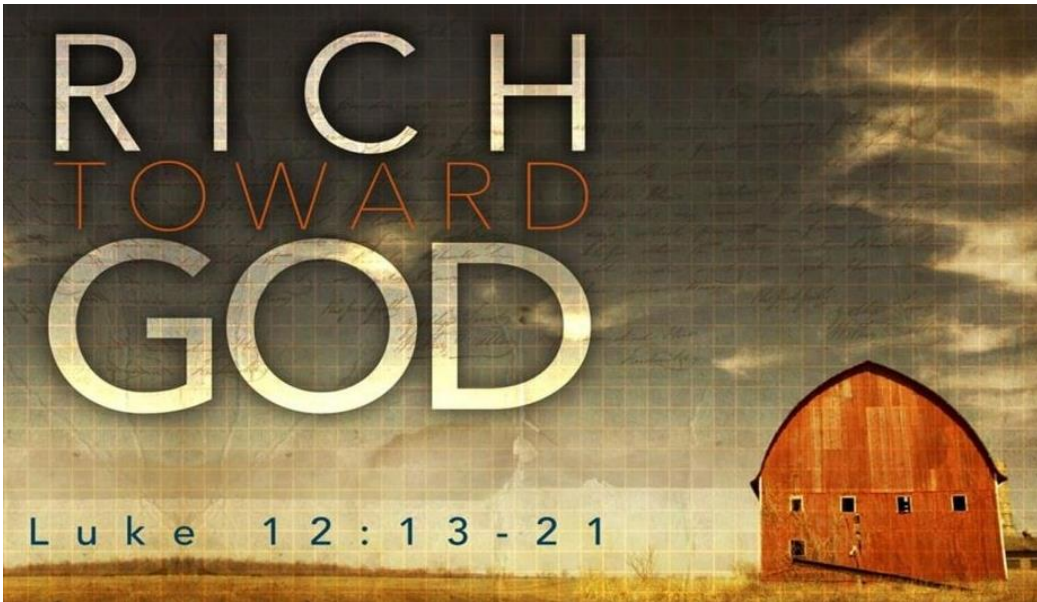


Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

July 27, 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

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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: Sisters and brothers, bear with one another in love, maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, and take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them in the light of Christ.(2 Corinthians 13:11) Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and one another trusting in the grace, mercy and forgiveness of Christ our Lord.

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

P: Holy and gracious God, **C: we confess that we have not led a life worthy of the calling to which we have been called. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We have not acted according to your will. We have grieved your Holy Spirit. Have mercy on us and forgive us according to the riches of your grace. In Christ make us holy and blameless before you in love, so that we might live to the praise of your glory. Amen**

The minister stands and addresses the congregation.

P: Almighty God, in his mercy, has given his Son to die for us and, for his sake, 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** “You Servants of God”

LBW 252

* **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: Almighty God, our beginning and our end, you clothe us in the righteousness of Christ making us rich beyond all measure. Give us the wisdom to turn away from those things that create in us greed and draw us to find our treasure in you; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. **Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-26

²Vanity of vanities, says the Preacher, vanity of vanities! All is vanity.

¹²I the Preacher have been king over Israel in Jerusalem. ¹³And I applied my heart to seek and to search out by wisdom all that is done under heaven. It is an unhappy business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹⁴I have seen everything that is done under the sun, and behold, all is vanity and a striving after wind.

¹⁸I hated all my toil in which I toil under the sun, seeing that I must leave it to the man who will come after me, ¹⁹and who knows whether he will be wise or a fool? Yet he will be master of all for which I toiled and used my wisdom under the sun. This also is vanity. ²⁰So I turned about and gave my heart up to despair over all the toil of my labors under the sun, ²¹because sometimes a person who has toiled with wisdom and knowledge and skill must leave everything to be enjoyed by someone who did not toil for it. This also is vanity and a great evil. ²²What has a man from all the toil and striving of heart with which he toils beneath the sun? ²³For all his days are full of sorrow, and his work is a vexation. Even in the night his heart does not rest. This also is vanity. ²⁴There is nothing better for a person than that he should eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, ²⁵for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? ²⁶For to the one who pleases him God has given wisdom and knowledge and joy, but to the sinner he

has given the business of gathering and collecting, only to give to one who pleases God. This also is vanity and a striving after wind.

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

PSALM 100

¹Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth!

²**Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!**

³Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

⁴**Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise! Give thanks to him; bless his name!**

⁵For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever, and his faithfulness to all generations.

SECOND READING: I Timothy 6:6-12, 17-21

⁶But godliness with contentment is great gain, ⁷for we brought nothing into the world, and^[c] we cannot take anything out of the world. ⁸But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be content. ⁹But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. ¹⁰For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. ¹¹But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. ¹²Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.

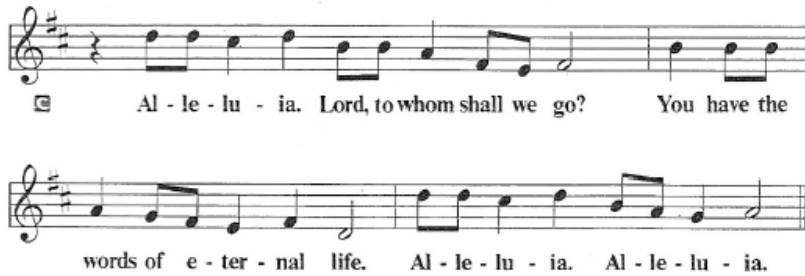
¹⁷As for the rich in this present age, charge them not to be haughty, nor to set their hopes on the uncertainty of riches, but on God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy. ¹⁸They are to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous and ready to share, ¹⁹thus storing up treasure for themselves as a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is truly life. ²⁰O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called “knowledge,” ²¹for by professing it some have swerved from the faith.

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: Luke 12:13-31**

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

¹³Someone in the crowd said to {Jesus}, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” ¹⁴But he said to him, “Man, who made me a judge or arbitrator over you?” ¹⁵And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ ²⁰But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

²²And he said to his disciples, “Therefore I tell you, do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat, nor about your body, what you will put on. ²³For life is more than food, and the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do as small a thing as that, why are you anxious about the rest? ²⁷Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. ²⁸But if God so clothes the grass, which is alive in the field today, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will he clothe you, O you of little faith! ²⁹And do not seek what you are to eat and what you are to drink, nor be worried. ³⁰For all the nations of the world seek after these things, and your Father knows that you need them. ³¹Instead, seek his

kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

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

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE



SERMON

***“Parable of the Rich Fool: Bigger Barns or Bigger Hearts?
Rich Toward the World or God? Anxious or Seeking Jesus
and His Kingdom?”***
Pastor Doug

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God”

WOV 783

***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

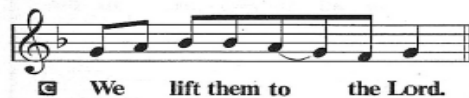
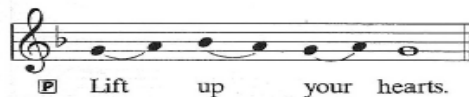
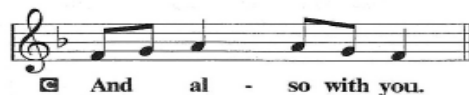
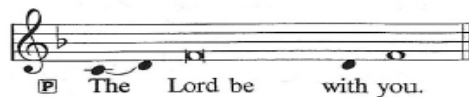


Let the vine - yards be fruit - ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our
cup of bless - ing. Gath - er a har - vest from the seeds that were
sown, that we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath - er the
hopes and the dreams of all; u - nite them with the prayers we
of - fer now. Grace our ta - ble with your pres - ence, and
give us a fore - taste of the feast to come.

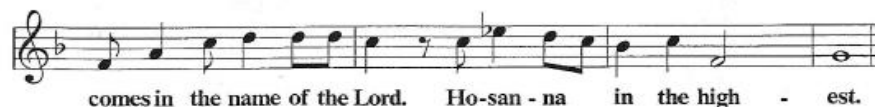
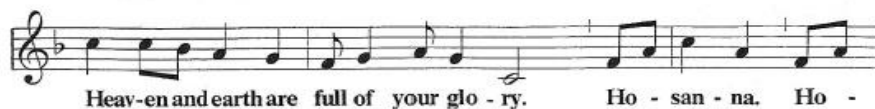
* **OFFERTORY PRAYER**

P: Generous God, you feed us with the harvest of the land and you provide for our every need., C: **Receive our gifts of money, imagination, talent, passion, and labor, and transform them into a feast of love and grace that welcomes all people, in the name of Jesus Christ, who welcomes us to the feast of Holy Communion. 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 score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. 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 word "grant" is underlined with a slur over it, and "us" is also underlined.

The congregation is invited to stand.

* **COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: Tender and merciful God, at your feast, you fed us who brought nothing, turning our emptiness to joy. C: **Filled with your abundant grace, send us now to be ministers of reconciliation, mending broken hearts, caring for the needs of our neighbors, working for justice, and striving for peace among all people, in the name of Jesus Christ. 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: God, who richly provides us with everything to enjoy, has given us the best gift of all - our Lord and Savior Jesus. Set free from sin, death, and anxiety about our needs, let us seek first the kingdom of God as we go in peace and joy to 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 Harvey Leatherman and Gary Leatherman by Karen Leatherman and Kim Parker.



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, 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, Dean Hudson, David King, Thurman McCaslin, Randy & Rita Neill, Mel Raybourne, Anita Sabino, Karlee Speagle, Scott Speagle, flood victims in Western North Carolina and Texas, 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: Seventh Sunday After Pentecost

9:30am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

Monday: 6:00pm – Leadership Ministry Board meeting

HAPPY JULY BIRTHDAY TO:

July 24 – Sherry Biggerstaff

July 28 – Harvey Leatherman

July 27 – Jack Wilfong

July 30 – Shirley Warlick

CONGRATULATIONS to Logan and Emily Sipe on the joyful birth of their son, Morley Everson Sipe. He was born on July 22 and weighed in at 9lbs 8oz!

Congratulations to proud grandparents Gene and Frankie Crouse and to all of the Crouse and Sipe family. Psalm 127:3 reminds us that "Children are a gift/blessing from the Lord." We pray for God's blessings upon Logan and Emily and their baby boy, Morley Everson!

SUNDAY SCHOOL: Please join us for Bible Study on Sunday mornings at 9:30am: We are currently using "The Story" Bible Study which is an overview of the Bible. Having briefly covered the first 5 books of the Bible, this Sunday we will begin the book of Joshua. After wandering in the desert for 40 years, God's people, under new leadership (Joshua) are ready to enter the promised land. If you would like a pdf of the participant guide, please email Pastor Doug._

Summer Sermon Series on the Parables of Jesus:

August 3 – Parables About Prayer: Persistent Widow, Friend in Need at Midnight

August 10 – Guest preacher Reverend Gary Coble

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)

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

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

¹⁵When ¹⁶And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, ¹⁷and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ ¹⁸And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹And I will say to my soul, ‘Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.’” ²⁰But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ ²¹So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

– Luke 12:16–21 –

In the rhetorical technique of hyperbole, one exaggerates to prove a point. To this end, one might use a contrived example that is ludicrous and comical in its extreme as an exaggerated version of the problem one is seeking to expose. The purpose of doing this is to show how bad something truly is. This is precisely what Jesus does in the parable of the rich fool. He uses a contrived and exaggerated example to expose the stupidity of covetousness.

In the parable this stupidity is evident in the behavior of the rich fool. He is so blinded by greed that he tears down his existing barns and builds new ones just to hold more of his stuff. But we might well ask, “Wouldn’t it be cheaper to share one’s excess than to tear down one’s barns and replace them with new ones? And even assuming that one needed more storage space, wouldn’t it be cheaper to build additional barns than to replace the existing ones?” But this is just the point that Jesus is making. The rich fool is so blinded by his covetousness that he can’t think straight. As a result, he does comically stupid things.

According to the Apostle Paul, covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). And the blinding nature of idolatry is evident in the parable. The rich fool forgot that he was God’s creature and that God had given him all his stuff. He therefore forgot that God owned him and all his stuff. Instead, he worshipped himself and his stuff rather than God. As a result, he laid up treasure for himself and forgot to be rich toward God. And since he and his entire estate belonged to God in the first place, he actually defrauded God in his lack of generosity.

Sadly, the rich fool is a picture of us. In the rich fool, we see the bondage of our will in sin. In the rich fool, we see that we are truly curved in on ourselves in idolatry and self-worship. But there is some good news in the midst of this picture. If we are concerned about these tendencies of ourselves, this is a sign that God has already freed us from our bondage to sin by his powerful grace. By contrast, the rich fool went headlong into his idolatry, oblivious and unconcerned, until it was too late.