

Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

August 10, 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 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** "God Himself Is Present"

LBW 249

*** 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 all grace, you delight in your children and giving them the kingdom. Give us faith to trust in your loving provision, that we might not worry needlessly, but live in freedom and gratitude; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever. **Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Genesis 15: 1-6

¹The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Fear not, Abram, I am your shield; your reward shall be very great.” ²But Abram said, “O LORD God, what will you give me, for I continue childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?” ³And Abram said, “Behold, you have given me no offspring, and a member of my household will be my heir.” ⁴And behold, the word of the LORD came to him: “This man shall not be your heir; your very own son shall be your heir.” ⁵And he brought him outside and said, “Look toward heaven, and number the stars, if you are able to number them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” ⁶And he believed the LORD, and he counted it to him as righteousness.

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

PSALM 33: 12-22

¹²Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

¹³**The Lord looks down from heaven; he sees all the children of man;**

¹⁴from where he sits enthroned he looks out on all the inhabitants of the earth,

¹⁵**he who fashions the hearts of them all and observes all their deeds.**

¹⁶The king is not saved by his great army; a warrior is not delivered by his great strength.

¹⁷**The war horse is a false hope for salvation, and by its great might it cannot rescue.**

¹⁸Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, on those who hope in his steadfast love,

¹⁹**that he may deliver their soul from death and keep them alive in famine.**

²⁰Our soul waits for the Lord; he is our help and our shield.

²¹**For our heart is glad in him, because we trust in his holy name.**

²²Let your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in you.

SECOND READING: Hebrews: 11: 1 -16

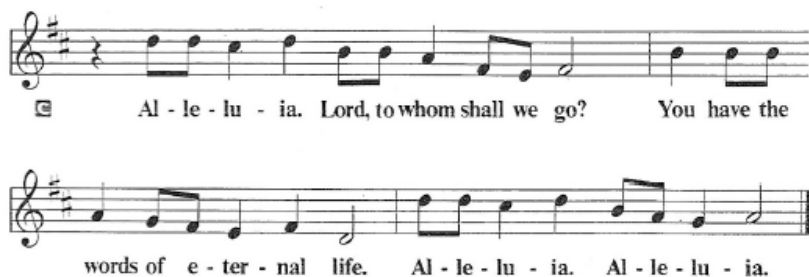
¹Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. ²For by it the people of old received their commendation. ³By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible. ⁴By faith Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which

he was commended as righteous, God commending him by accepting his gifts. And through his faith, though he died, he still speaks. ⁵By faith Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found, because God had taken him. Now before he was taken he was commended as having pleased God. ⁶And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. ⁷By faith Noah, being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, in reverent fear constructed an ark for the saving of his household. By this he condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness that comes by faith. ⁸By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance. And he went out, not knowing where he was going. ⁹By faith he went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. ¹⁰For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. ¹¹By faith Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful who had promised. ¹²Therefore from one man, and him as good as dead, were born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as many as the innumerable grains of sand by the seashore. ¹³These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. ¹⁴For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. ¹⁵If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. ¹⁶But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

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”**



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

²²{Jesus} 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

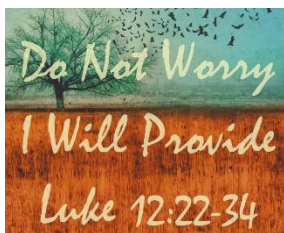
the body more than clothing. ²⁴Consider the ravens: they neither sow nor reap, they have neither storehouse nor barn, and yet God feeds them. Of how much more value are you than the birds! ²⁵And which of you by being anxious can add a single hour to his span of life? ²⁶If then you are not able to do 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. ³²Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. ³³Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. ³⁴For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. [³⁵Stay dressed for action and keep your lamps burning, ³⁶and be like men who are waiting for their master to come home from the wedding feast, so that they may open the door to him at once when he comes and knocks. ³⁷Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them. ³⁸If he comes in the second watch, or in the third, and finds them awake, blessed are those servants! ³⁹But know this, that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would not have left his house to be broken into. ⁴⁰You also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.”]

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



*“Have No Fear”
Pastor Gary Coble*

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “How Firm a Foundation”

LBW 507

***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**

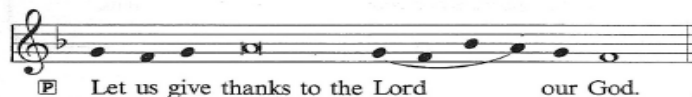
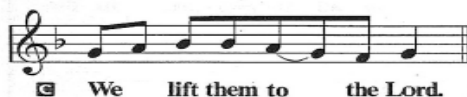
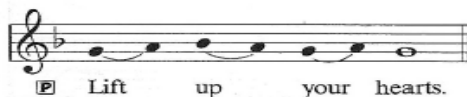
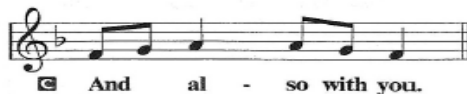
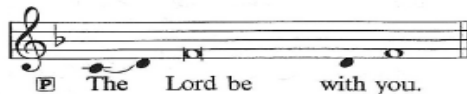
Let the Vineyards

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.

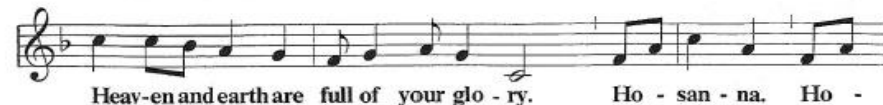
* OFFERTORY PRAYER

P: 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

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. **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 heavenly food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. As your disciples, send us forth to be your people in the world, to pray for one another and to proclaim the Gospel in word and deed through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. C: **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. Amen.

*SENDING HYMN “How Great Thou Art”

LBW 532

***DISMISSAL**

P: Jesus love you and calls you to “seek first the Kingdom of God” as you are sent to be His disciples. Let us go in peace and joy to serve the Lord and share the Good News in word and deed! **C: Thanks be to God**

POSTLUDE



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, Cole 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, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, Dean Hudson, David King, Randy & Rita Neill, Anita Sabino, Karlee Speagle, Scott Speagle, Zach Speagle, flood victims in Western North Carolina and Texas, Teachers, Staff & Students for the Upcoming Year, 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: Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

9:30am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

HAPPY AUGUST BIRTHDAY TO:

August 1 – James Hall, Gary Leatherman

August 3 – Sandra Powell

August 7 – Martha Johnson

August 12 – Jane Moss

August 23 – Lynette Momier, Betty Wilfong

August 30 – Pat Dietz

PRAY & GO 30 DAY DISCIPLESHIP PRAYER JOURNEY

Dear Friends, I hope and pray that you are enjoying reading and putting into action the book and 30-day prayer journey, “Pray and Go.” On Day 1 we prayed that God would help us to be Great Commission Christians based on the words of our Lord from Matthew 28:19-20, “Go and make disciples...” We are called to share the Gospel with others and to help them grow as disciples. On Day 2, we looked at Acts 1:8, Jesus said, “You will be



my witnesses in Jerusalem... to the ends of the earth.” When we received the Holy Spirit, our Lord commanded us to be His witnesses in the world. Can this command (will) become our great joy and privilege (want)? Reflect on God’s love for you in Jesus and remind yourself of the joy and blessing of being a child of God. How can we keep this Good News inside and not share it? On Day 3, we prayed

for the “body of Christ” to get moving. We all know how important it is that we keep our physical bodies moving. St. Paul described the Church as a body with many parts working together to glorify God (see 1 Cor. 12:12-27). So on Day 3, we prayed for God’s Church here at Grace. That we would get moving in the power of the Spirit and focus on being a Great Commission Church. On Day 4, we were encouraged to pray for the pastor and staff and leadership of the Church. Since this prayer includes me and my family, I thank you now for your prayers! Let us also pray for our wonderful staff and leadership as well, that we all might serve with the passion of Christ as we live out our faith in Jesus. On Day 5, we read that, “the earnest prayer of a righteous person has great power and produces wonderful results.” (James 5:16) On Day 5 we were called to pray for one another here at Grace, that we would have a heart full of Jesus’ love that is focused outward, not only toward one another in the church, but especially toward our community. On Day 6 we were reminded that we can’t do this apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. Let us pray for the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit as we offer ourselves to be great commission disciples. On Day 7, we were called to pray for courage – the courage to stand for Christ and to share the Gospel with others. In Acts 4 we see the courage of the early Church to speak boldly. May we speak and live boldly for Christ in our world today. Today is Day 8 where we are called to lift specific prayers for our community. Thank you all for being a part of the 30-day Pray and Go Discipleship Challenge! God bless you as we enter week 2! ***In Christ’s love, Pastor Doug Hefner***

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 6 books of the Bible, this Sunday we will begin the book of Judges. After entering the Promised Land, the people of God continued to face many challenges, most of which were of their own making. God raised up Judges or leaders to help the people during this difficult time. We will look at a few of the judges and the lessons that we can learn from them for our faith journey today.

Summer Sermon Series on the Parables of Jesus:

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)

NEW DATE FOR HOMECOMING The Board has elected to change the date for Homecoming to September 21st. We will have invitations for you to invite your family and friends and if anyone would like to help with the plans for that day please let us know.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING on August 17th to briefly consider a change in the Carolinas Mission Region constitution having to do with the number of delegates each church can send.

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 – Cindy Bivens
Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Shelly Scronce
Ushers – David Wilfong & Jack Parris
Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Tim Eckard

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

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?

³¹Instead, seek his kingdom, and these things will be added to you.

– Luke 12:22–26, 31 –

In this parable Jesus is confronting the sin of chronic anxiety. However, to properly delineate Jesus’ point, we must first understand what he does not mean. First, Jesus is not saying that we should be lazy and not work. He is not saying that we should forego preparations to feed and clothe ourselves. Although Jesus compares us to ravens, he does not intend for us to wait around for God to drop a worm in our mouths. The comparison to ravens is hyperbolic, and its analogy inexact. Jesus knows that God created humanity to take dominion over the earth (Genesis 1:28), and he therefore knows that such a task requires industry, planning, and thrift, not to mention God’s help. So, Jesus is not asking us to contradict God’s design for humanity in creation.

Second, Jesus is not talking about acute anxiety. Acute anxiety helps us gear up for a challenge and then passes away when the challenge is over. For instance, it is normal to feel anxiety before a test, a musical performance, a sermon, or an important business meeting. In these challenging situations, acute anxiety is a good thing because it keeps us on our toes and helps us perform. So, Jesus is not opposing acute anxiety.

What Jesus opposes is chronic anxiety. Chronic anxiety is an unhealthy preoccupation with fear, worry, and dread in regard to things that we cannot control or even influence. Therefore, chronic anxiety does not help us plan and prepare. It does not help us perform. Instead, it reduces us to helplessness and passivity because it is at bottom a lack of faith or else a weak faith. And without faith we have no kingdom orientation for action in our world.

So, the answer to anxiety is faith in God. The answer is to know God, to trust God, and to pray to God. The answer is to let God handle the things that we can affect and especially the things we can’t. So, if we struggle with chronic anxiety, we should first rejoice that we have enough faith to recognize our problem and struggle with it. Then, we should ask God to strengthen our faith. With our strengthened faith, we should next seek God’s kingdom in all areas of our life, including our family and business life. And in seeking God’s kingdom, we will act to feed and clothe our families and ourselves.

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