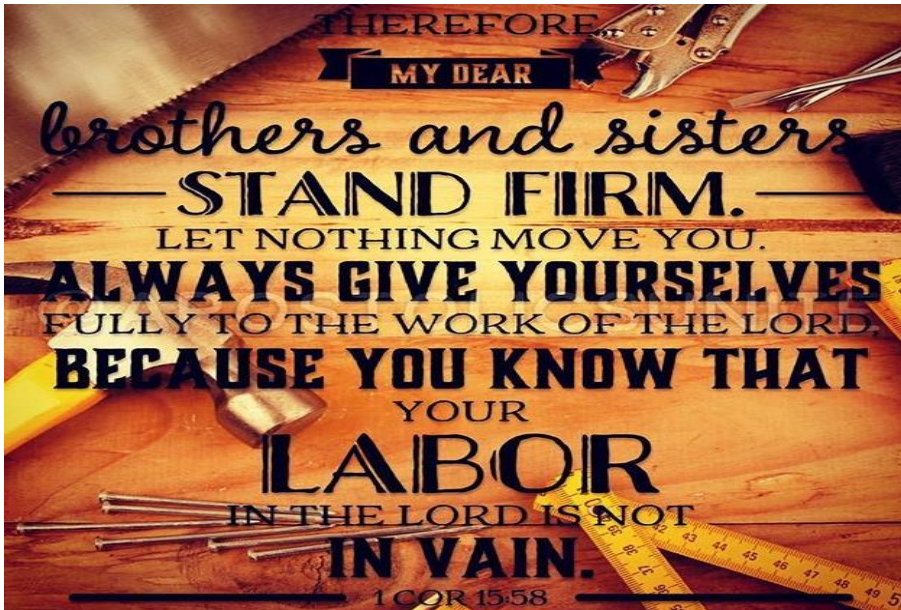


Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

August 31, 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: 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** “When Morning Gilds the Skies” Verses 1-4 LBW 546

* **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: Gracious God, you are the source of all wisdom and purpose, you are the blessing of those who labor. Be with us in our labor to guide and govern our world. Give all men and women work that enhances human dignity and bonds us to one another. Give us pride in our work, a fair return for our labor, and joy in knowing that our work finds its source in you. Chiefly we are grateful for the finished work of your Son our Lord Jesus who won for us salvation through his labor of love upon the cross, his death and resurrection. May our labor always be done in the name of and in the love of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. **C. Amen**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Ecclesiastes 3:9-15, 22

⁹ What gain has the worker from his toil? ¹⁰ I have seen the business that God has given to the children of man to be busy with. ¹¹ He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also, he has put eternity into man's heart, yet so that he cannot find out what God has done from the beginning to the end. ¹² I perceived that there is nothing better for them than to be joyful and to do good as long as they live; ¹³ also that everyone should eat and drink and take pleasure in all his toil—this is God's gift to man. ¹⁴ I perceived that whatever God does endures forever; nothing can be added to it, nor anything taken from it. God has done it, so that people fear before him. ¹⁵ That which is, already has been; that which is to be, already has been; and God seeks what has been driven away. ²² So I saw that there is nothing better than that a man should rejoice in his work, for that is his lot. Who can bring him to see what will be after him?

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

PSALM 90: 1-12

¹Lord, you have been our refuge
from one generation to another.

²**Before the mountains were brought forth, or the land and the earth were born,
from age to age you are God.**

³You turn us back to the dust and say,
“Go back, O child of earth.”

⁴**For a thousand years in your sight are like yesterday when it is past
and like a watch in the night.**

⁵You sweep us away like a dream;
we fade away suddenly like the grass.

⁶**In the morning it is green and flourishes;
in the evening it is dried up and withered.**

⁷For we consume away in your displeasure;
we are afraid because of your wrathful indignation.

⁸**Our iniquities you have set before you,
and our secret sins in the light of your countenance.**

⁹When you are angry, all our days are gone;
we bring our years to an end like a sigh.

¹⁰**The span of our life is seventy years, perhaps in strength even eighty;
yet the sum of them is but labor and sorrow,
for they pass away quickly and we are gone.**

¹¹Who regards the power of your wrath?
who rightly fears your indignation?

¹²**So teach us to number our days
that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.**

SECOND READING: Colossians 3: 12-17

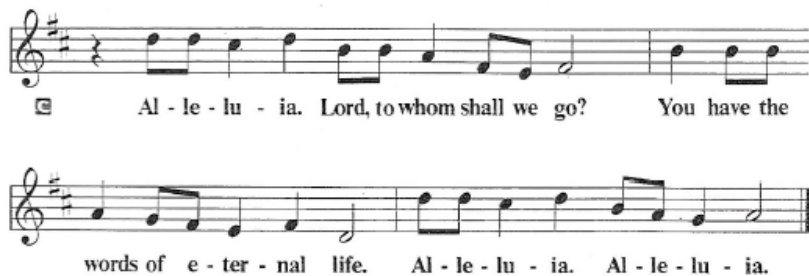
¹² As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. ¹³ Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. ¹⁶ Let the word of Christ^[g] dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. ¹⁷ ***And whatever you do, in word or deed,***

do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through 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”



***GOSPEL: Matthew 25: 14-30**

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

¹⁴{Jesus said to the disciples,} “For it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted to them his property. ¹⁵To one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶He who had received the five talents went at once and traded with them, and he made five talents more. ¹⁷So also he who had the two talents made two talents more. ¹⁸But he who had received the one talent went and dug in the ground and hid his master’s money. ¹⁹Now after a long time the master of those servants came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰And he who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five talents more, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me five talents; here, I have made five talents more.’ ²¹His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²²And he also who had the two talents came forward, saying, ‘Master, you delivered to me two talents; here, I have made two talents more.’ ²³His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.’ ²⁴He also who had received the one talent came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you scattered no seed, ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here, you have what is yours.’ ²⁶But his master answered him, ‘You wicked and slothful servant! You knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I scattered no seed? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and at my coming I should have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So

take the talent from him and give it to him who has the ten talents. ²⁹For to everyone who has will more be given, and he will have an abundance. But from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away. ³⁰And cast the worthless servant into the outer darkness. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON



*“Jesus’ Labor of Love and Our Call as His Church to Labor in His Love!”
Pastor Doug*

***HYMN OF THE DAY** “Take My Life, That I May Be”

LBW 406

***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**

P: The Lord be with you. C: **And also with you.**

P: Lift up your hearts. C: **We lift them to the Lord.**

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. C: **It is right to give him thanks and praise.**

***HOLY, HOLY, HOLY**

Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

*** 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 score includes a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are written below the notes, with hyphens indicating syllables that span across notes.

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 congregation is invited to stand.

*** COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another; for the sake of Jesus Christ our 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 "Rise Up, O Saints of God "**

LBW 383

***DISMISSAL**

P: Celebrating and receiving Jesus' labor of love for us, His finished work of salvation in His death and resurrection, let us now go in peace and joy to lovingly serve and labor for the Lord and our neighbors. C: **Thanks be to God**



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, 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, and Nancy Willis.

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, Ashlee Bumgardner, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, Randy & Rita Neill, Anita Sabino, Karlee Speagle, Scott Speagle, Zach Speagle, and Robert Whisnant. Teachers, Staff & Students for the Upcoming Year, Prayers for world peace and for our church, 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: Twelfth Sunday After Pentecost

9:30am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

Wednesday

7:00pm – Vespers with Bible Study – Introduction to Book of Jude

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:

September 1 – Larry Jarrett

September 2 – Glenda Childers

September 4 – Gene Crouse, Brenda Jarrett, Mike Pisko, Ted Whisnant

September 12 – Jeff Scronce

September 13 – Debi Pisko

September 15 – Kathy Leatherman

September 24 – David Wilfong

September 25 – Joe Momier

September 27 – Kandra Johnson

PRAY & GO PRAYER JOURNEY



Dear Grace Family, Thank you for going on the "Pray and Go" Prayer Journey for the last 30 days! Today is Day 29 and tomorrow is Day 30! I know how life is... things happen and we get busy. Some of you (including me) need a little more time to complete the journey. Maybe your spouse has had the book and you have not had time to catch up.

Maybe you didn't include your children on this and could use some extra time to include them. Take more time in September to finish the book and complete the inviting activities for some of the chapters. We will have a Pray and Go Celebration Continental Breakfast on September 26 at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall. You will be invited to share a story of how you invited, wrote, prayed for, and/or visited someone. We will also gather to encourage each other to make "Pray and Go" a way of life, a way of discipleship. Praying for, inviting, and sharing the Gospel are activities that we are blessed to do as God's people. God loves us in such an amazing way in Christ Jesus! How can we not share that Good News and invite others to experience this in the life of His Church!

In Jesus' name, Pastor Doug

UPCOMING EVENTS

Vespers and Bible Study on Wednesdays at 7pm for September

Sept. 3 Bible Study - Jude; Sept. 10 Bible Study - Philemon

Sept. 17 Bible Study - Titus Part 1; Sept. 24 Bible Study - Titus Part 2

September 7 - We will celebrate Grandparents Day! We will give thanks to God not only for Grandparents, but all members of our family. We will also celebrate that we, the Church, are the family of God.

September 14 - Team Sunday - Everyone is invited to wear your favorite team jersey (high school, college, or pro team) as we celebrate that we, as the Church, the body of Christ, are part of God's team. We will also talk about our ministry teams and invite everyone to be a part of the Dream Team.

September 21 - Homecoming Sunday Worship at 10:30am followed by Covered Dish Dinner in the Fellowship Hall. Please invite friends, extended family, and neighbors! We have invitations for you to send.

September 24 9:30am Pray and Go Celebration Continental Breakfast

October 5 at 5pm Blessing of the Pets Service (Shelter weather permitting) We will have a short service and a blessing for all the pets. Catawba Humane Society representative

will be invited and we will receive an offering to benefit the care they provide pets in our area.

October 26 Reformation Sunday

October 26 Trunk or Treat Outreach Event with Hot Dogs for Community 5-7pm

See Pastor Doug if you would like to help; everyone is encouraged to participate so that we can reach out to our community with the love of Jesus.

November 2 – All Saints Day Service – we will remember and give thanks for all the Saints, especially those members who have died in the past year and are now with the Lord.

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus told a parable about a man who entrusted his property to some of his servants, that they would do business for him in his absence. The servants received different amounts of talents (money), all of which were according to their abilities. Each of the servants increased the number of talents given to him except for one. The servant



who received only one talent buried it in the ground and refused to work with it to increase its original value. Upon his return, the master was pleased with the other servants for being faithful stewards of what they were given, but he chastised the one who buried the

master's talent and did nothing with it. The master commended the faithful servants and granted them even more, but the unfaithful servant was cast into outer darkness. • How does faithful stewardship require great responsibility? In what sense does our trustworthiness in small things demonstrate our trustworthiness in larger things? • Are the things we have in life ours to do with as we please? Do we deserve all of the things we have acquired? How does the answer to that question show where our hearts really are?

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