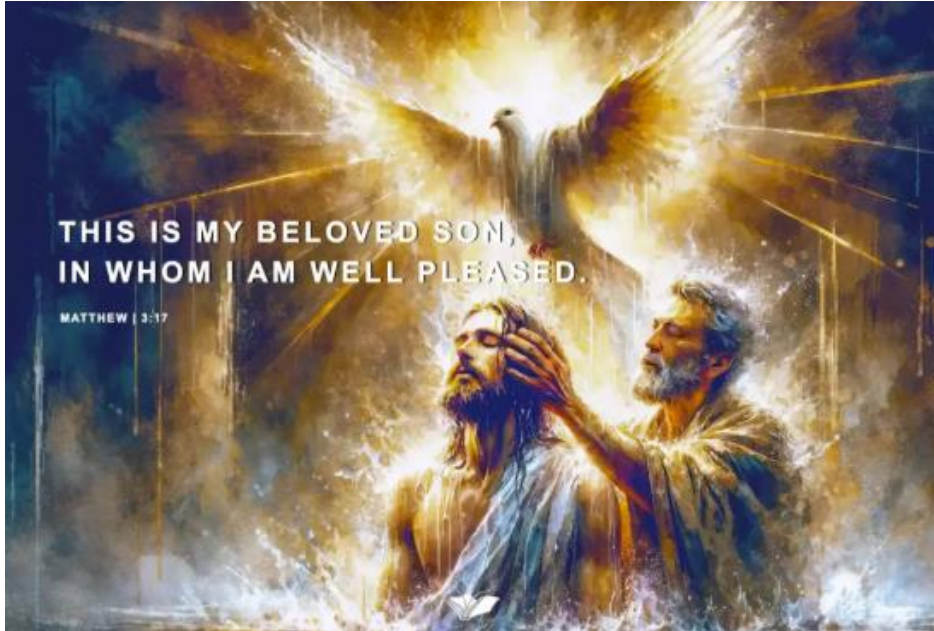


Baptism of Our Lord

January 11, 2026 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: 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. Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

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: God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of the Father, and of the + Son, and of the Holy Spirit your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

C: Amen.

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: Heavenly Father, in Jesus’ baptism you declared him to be your beloved Son and set him apart as your agent of grace for your creation. May we who are baptized into his life also be sent as agents of grace in your world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit. **C: Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Isaiah 43: 1-7

¹Now thus says the LORD, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. ²When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. ³For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Cush and Seba in exchange for you. ⁴Because you are precious in my eyes, and honored, and I love you, I give men in return for you, peoples in exchange for your life. ⁵Fear not, for I am with you; I will bring your offspring from the east, and from the west I will gather you. ⁶I will say to the north, Give up, and to the south, Do not withhold; bring my sons from afar and my daughters from the end of the earth, ⁷everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

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

SECOND READING: Romans 6: 1-11

¹What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? ²By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? ³Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶We know that our old self was crucified with him in

order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. ⁹We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. ¹¹So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

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

The congregation is invited to stand.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION: **“When Jesus Came to Jordan”**

WOV 647

Alt. Tune: Aurellia (The Church's One Foundation)

***GOSPEL:** **Matthew 3: 13-17**

P: The holy gospel according to St. Matthew.

C: Glory to you, O Lord.

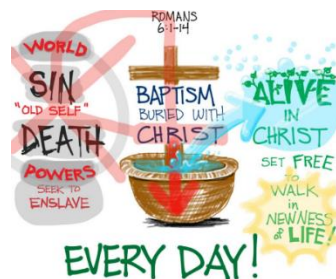
¹³Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; ¹⁷and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

P: The Gospel of the Lord. **C: Praise to you, O Christ!**

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



“Baptized into Christ: Blessed to be a Blessing”

Pastor Doug Hefner

**The Sacrament of Holy Baptism for Charlene Beaver
and Affirmation of Baptism for Steven Beaver**

PRESENTATION

In baptism our gracious heavenly Father frees us from sin and death by joining us to the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ. We are born children of a fallen humanity; by water and the Holy Spirit we are reborn children of God and made members of the church, the body of Christ. Living with Christ and in the communion of saints, we grow in faith, love, and obedience to the will of God.

Charlene, called by the Holy Spirit, trusting in the grace and love of God, do you desire to be baptized into Christ? **I do.**

Steven, having been baptized into Christ, do you now desire to be a member of the body of Christ here at Grace? **I do.**

Living in God's covenant of grace in Christ through Holy Baptism, will you
live among God's faithful people,
hear the word of God and share in the Lord's supper,
proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed,
serve all people, following the example of Jesus,
and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?

Charlene and Steven: I do, and I ask God to help and guide me.

People of God, do you promise to nurture Charlene and Steven and their family in the Christian faith and to help them live in the covenant of baptism and in communion with the church? **We do, and we ask God to help and guide us.**

***PROFESSION OF FAITH**

I ask you to profess your faith in Christ Jesus, reject sin, and confess the faith of the church. Do you renounce the devil and all the forces that defy God? **I renounce them.** Do you renounce the powers of this world that rebel against God? **I renounce them.** Do you renounce the ways of sin that draw you from God? **I renounce them.** Do you believe in God the Father? **I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God?

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,

who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

Do you believe in God the Holy Spirit?

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

***THANKSGIVING AT THE FONT**

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

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

Let us pray: Blessed are you . . . **Amen.**

Please be seated

BAPTISM

Charlene Rae, I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

Let us pray. We give you thanks, O God, that through water and the Holy Spirit you give your daughters and sons new birth, cleanse them from sin, and raise them to eternal life. Sustain Charlene with the gift of your Holy Spirit: the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord, the spirit of joy in your presence, both now and forever. **Amen.**

Using anointing oil, the sign of the cross is marked on the forehead of the baptized.

Charlene, child of God, you have been sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. **Amen.**

Steven presents the light of Christ to Charlene: **Charlene, beloved child of God, Jesus said, I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will have the light of life. Let your light so shine before others that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Amen**

Let us welcome the new baptized Charlene and new member Steven:

We welcome you Charlene and Steven into the body of Christ and into the mission and ministry we share in our partnership in Christ: join us in giving thanks and praise to God and bearing God's redeeming and loving Word to all the world. 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**

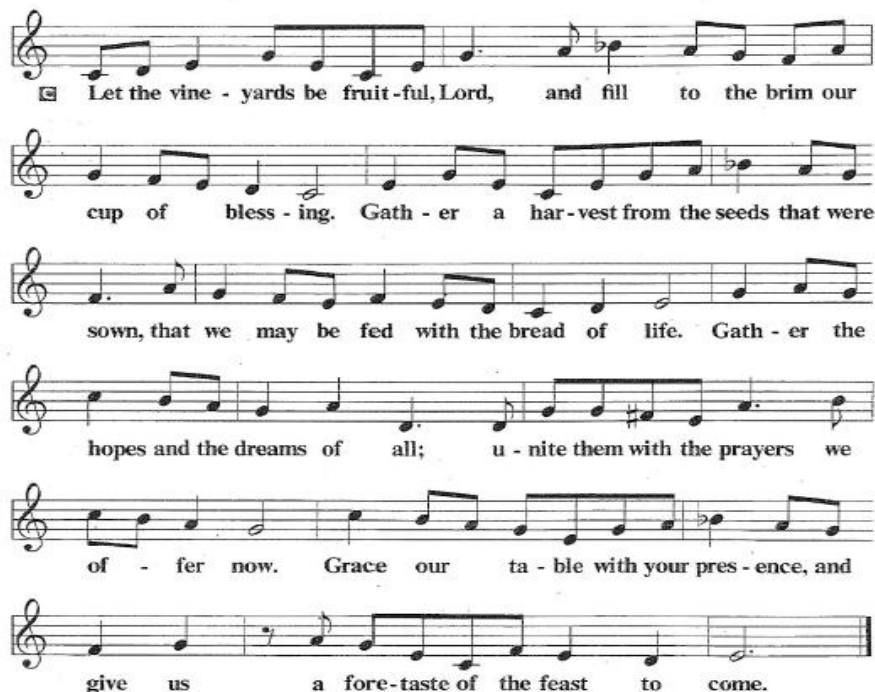
P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **C: And also with you.**

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 God, receive the gifts we bring, ourselves, our time and our possessions. Through this meal of grace unite us as your body, shining with the light of your justice and mercy; for the sake of him who gave Himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. **C: Amen**

*** THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE**

LBW PG. 68

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 our thanks and praise.

*** 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 for the Communion Song 'Lamb of God' is written on four staves of music. The melody is 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 score includes a treble clef, 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. The final note of the fourth staff is a double bar line.

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: O Morning Star, fair and bright, you have refreshed us again with the heavenly food of your body and blood. As we go now, nourished in faith and love, be present with us today, tomorrow and everyday so that we will tell and live-out the story of your never-ending love now and forever in the name of Jesus.

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**

“Blessed Assurance”

WOV 699

***DISMISSAL**

P: As God's beloved baptized daughters and sons let us go forth in joy and peace to love and serve the Lord!

C: Thanks be to God.



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, Harvey 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, and Nancy Willis.

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, Ashlee Bumgardner, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, family of Tim Childers, family of Wendy Cloninger, Sonya Elliott & family (car accident, recovering at home now), Anne Poovey, Family of Ken Propst, Randy & Rita Neill, Jeff Richards (Steven Beaver's cousin), Anita Sabino, Jack Speagle, Scott Speagle, Shirley Weaver, and Todd Wilfong. 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. Prayers of welcome for Steven and Charlene Beaver.

HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAY TO:

January 4 – Stormy Shull

January 9 – Lula Ingle

January 13 – Sheila Drum

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: Baptism of Our Lord

9:30am – Sunday School 10:30am - Worship Celebration

After Worship – Special Congregational Meeting

Monday: 6:00pm – Finance Committee / Board Meeting

Wednesday: 6:30pm – Evening Vespers

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sun, 1/11/26 The Baptism of Our Lord (Matthew 3:13-17)

Sun, 1/18/26 Grace hosts first service of Week of Christian Unity at 6pm, Dinner following (we provide soup, sandwiches, dessert afterwards)

Wed, 1/21/26 Grace Senior Luncheon and Program 12 noon All Welcome

Wed, 1/21/26 Ebenezer hosts Christian Unity Service at 6pm, Dinner following

Sun, 1/25/26 Daniels Lutheran hosts Christian Unity Service at 6pm, Dinner following

Sun, 2/8/26 Friendship Sunday, Everyone asked to invite your friends to worship. We will have a special gift for friends who join us. Theme of the service and sermon will be about the blessings of Christian friendship!

Sun, 2/15/26 Transfiguration Sunday

Wed, 2/18/26 Ash Wednesday Service, Imposition of Ashes/Communion

SPECIAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The Board has called a special congregational meeting for today immediately following worship. The purpose of the meeting is to approve a bid from Precision Heating & Cooling to replace all inside and outside units for the main sanctuary building. The system has reached the end of its functional life and can no longer be patched. The bid will be explained and the congregation will be asked to vote to approve the expenditure in accordance with our Constitution.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

The Finance Committee will meet with the Board on Monday, January 12th at 6:00pm to hear a presentation from Fore Rembert of Benjamin F. Edwards Investments. Attendance by all officers of the Board is required. The regular monthly Board meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 19th at 6:00pm. The two meetings could not be combined due to a lengthy agenda for the regular Board meeting. Thank you in advance for participating.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, January 18-25 The theme for 2026 is "Called to Proclaim the Mighty Acts of the Lord," based on 1 Peter 2:9. This annual event encourages Christian communities to pray for unity and collaboration among different denominations. It has been celebrated since 1908 and is recognized worldwide. In our community 5 Churches are coming together during this week to pray for Christian Unity. We will gather for worship 3 times during the week and enjoy fellowship and refreshments together. Grace is hosting the service and fellowship afterwards on Sunday, January 18 at 6pm. We will need volunteers to bring croc pots of soup and chili, make sandwiches and desserts. A sign-up list will be shared on Jan. 11.

Sun, 1/18/26 Grace hosts first service of Week of Christian Unity at 6pm, Dinner Following

Wed, 1/21/26 Ebenezer hosts Christian Unity Service at 6pm, Dinner following

Sun, 1/25/26 Daniels Lutheran hosts Christian Unity Service at 6pm, Dinner following

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 – Sheila Drum & Sherry Biggerstaff

Ushers – Chris Jarrett & Jack Parris

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jeff Scronce

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Baptism of Our Lord – January 11, 2026

*“...and behold, a voice from heaven said,
‘This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.’”*

- Matthew 3:17 -

God has a voice. John writes in his gospel, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). As we look back at the beginning, we see the Spirit hovering over the formless and empty earth. The first manifestation of God’s presence was his voice. “And God said, ‘Let there be light’” (Genesis 1:3). God spoke and there was light. God spoke again and created the heavens and the earth. He spoke, and there was life.

Then, he spoke to us: first to Adam and Eve, then to Noah, the patriarchs, judges, kings and prophets. And he spoke through human beings, putting his voice in their mouths. It wasn’t enough. We didn’t listen. We listened to the wrong voices. We went our own way. But at the right time God sent his Son, the Word incarnate, to bring salvation and peace to his people. God’s voice was given flesh in the life of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not come in his majesty and divine glory, but took upon himself the very nature of man. At his baptism, Jesus identified fully with us; the purpose of his life was to take on sin and destroy it forever. He came to bridge the divide between God and man so we can live in harmony with God and one another. The Spirit of God again hovered over the formless and empty earth: He spoke, and there was Light. Jesus Christ was anointed with the power to change the world, to restore our relationship with our Father.

Jesus is God’s Son, but he is also fully human, the living Word in flesh. At the Jordan, God assured Jesus that he was doing what he was sent to do with the words, “You are my beloved.” He has spoken the same words to us in Baptism, giving us the assurance that we, too, are now his children.

Martin Luther encouraged Christians to remember their Baptism often. In his *Small Catechism*, Luther wrote that when we get out of bed in the morning and when we go to bed at night we should make the sign of the cross and say, “Under the care of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.” These words about our baptism will remind us that God is always with us, so that we can live as we have been called to live.

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