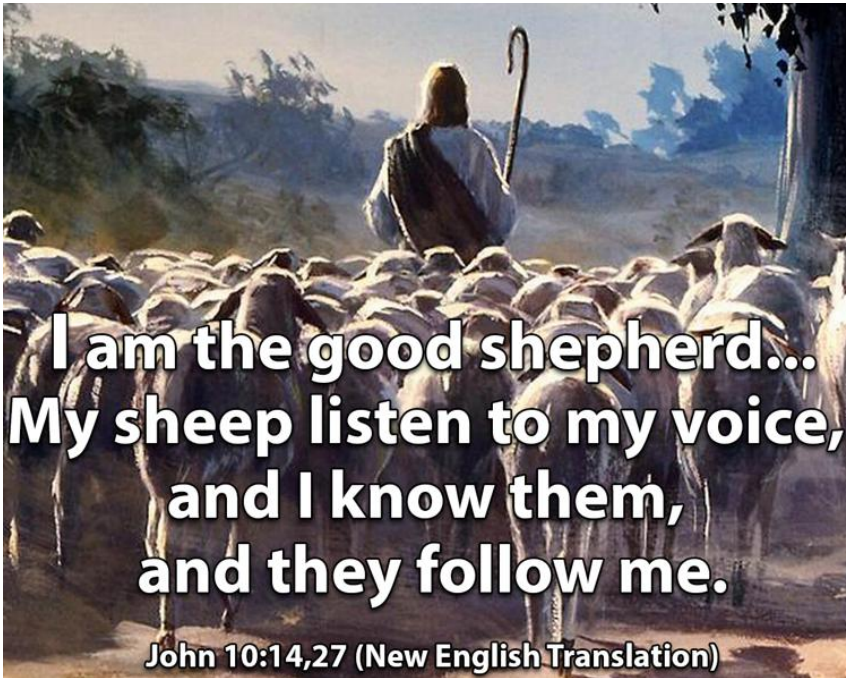


Fourth Sunday of Easter

April 26, 2026 10:30 AM



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



NORTH AMERICAN
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

The congregation is invited to stand.

* **BRIEF ORDER OF CONFSSION 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.

Silence for reflection and self-examination.

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: 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.

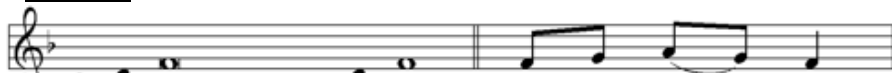
C: Amen

*** GATHERING HYMN**

“The King of Love My Shepherd Is”

LBW 456

*** KYRIE**



Ⓐ In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Ⓞ Lord, have mer - cy.



Ⓐ For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Ⓞ Lord, have mer - cy.



Ⓐ For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



Ⓞ Lord, have mer - cy.



Ⓐ For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Ⓞ Lord, have mer - cy.



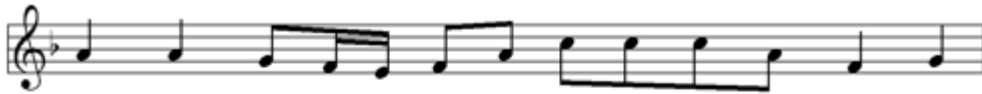
Ⓐ Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. Ⓞ A - men

* HYMN OF PRAISE

“Glory to God”



♩ Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his peo - ple on earth.



♩ Lord God, heav - en - ly king, al - might - y God and Fa - ther:



We wor - ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



You take a - way the sin of the world; have mer - cy on us.



You are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther; re - ceive our prayer.



For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,



you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,



in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men

* **GREETING**

P: Alleluia! Christ is risen. **C: Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

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: Living God, your Son cares for your people as a shepherd cares for his sheep, calling us each by name. Grant that we may hear and recognize his voice, and, following him, be brought safely through every trial and temptation; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen. *The congregation may be seated.*

FIRST READING: Ezekiel 34: 1-6, 11-16

The word of the Lord came to me: ²Mortal, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: To the shepherds—thus says the Lord God: Woe, you shepherds of Israel who have been feeding yourselves! Should not shepherds feed the sheep? ³You eat the fat; you clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatted calves, but you do not feed the sheep. ⁴You have not strengthened the weak; you have not healed the sick; you have not bound up the injured; you have not brought back the strays; you have not sought the lost, but with force and harshness you have ruled them. ⁵So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and scattered they became food for all the wild animals. ⁶My sheep were scattered; they wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill; my sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with no one to search or seek for them.

¹¹For thus says the Lord God: I myself will search for my sheep and will sort them out. ¹²As shepherds sort out their flocks when they are among scattered sheep,^[a] so I will sort out my sheep. I will rescue them from all the places to which they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. ¹³I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries and bring them into their own land, and I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the watercourses, and in all the inhabited parts of the land. ¹⁴I will feed them with good pasture, and the mountain heights of Israel shall be their pasture; there they shall lie down in good grazing land, and they shall feed on rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I will make them lie down, says the Lord God. ¹⁶I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strays, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, but the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them with justice.

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

PSALM 23

¹The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

²**He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters.**

³He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

⁴**Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.**

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; you anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

⁶**Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.**

SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2: 19-25

¹⁹For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. ²²He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. ²³When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

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”

Al - le - lu - ia. Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the

words of e - ter - nal life. Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

GOSPEL: John 10: 1-15

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

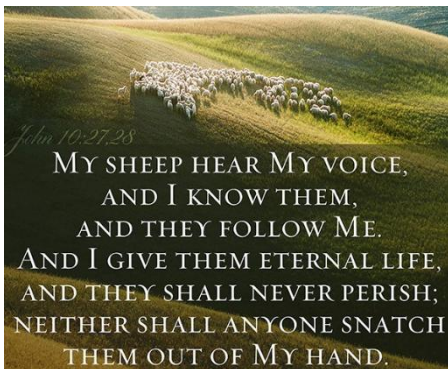
“Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. ² The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. ³ The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. ⁴ When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. ⁵ They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” ⁶ Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. ⁷ So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who came before me are thieves and bandits, but the sheep did not listen to them. ⁹ I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved and will come in and go out and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. ¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand, who is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. ¹³ The hired hand runs away because a hired hand does not care for the sheep. ¹⁴ I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and my own know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep.

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON



“In the Hands of the Good Shepherd”

Pastor Doug

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“The Lord’s My Shepherd”

LBW 451

***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 – our selves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

DIALOGUE

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

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

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C: It is good and right to give God our thanks and praise.

* **WORDS OF INSTITUTION**

LBW p. 70

* **LORD'S PRAYER**

LBW p. 71

* **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



☐ 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.

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; and we pray that in your mercy you would 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**

* **SENDING HYMN**

“Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us”

TCH 688

* **DISMISSAL**

P: Jesus is our Good Shepherd who laid down His life for us. Listen to His voice and follow Him as we go in peace and love 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 Phil and Malinda Leatherman by Susan Setzer.



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, Alice Parris, 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, Terry & John Barnett, Ashlee Bumgardner, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, the family of Jim Kilby, Peggy Klutz, Anne Poovey, Randy & Rita Neill, Donald Smith, Scott Speagle, and the family of Martha Young. 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.

HAPPY MARCH BIRTHDAY TO:

Andrew Crouse – April 8 Jennifer Scott – April 11
April 13 – Rick Bivens Shelly Scronce – April 16
April 18 – Cole Leatherman Libby Travis – April 22
Tim Leatherman – April 29

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: Fourth Sunday of Easter

9:15am – Sunday School 10:30am - Worship Celebration

Wednesday: 6:30pm – Evening Vespers Service

SAVE THE DATES

Grace is part of a community VBS with 5 other churches. This year's VBS is *Illumination Station: Shining a Light On Who Jesus Really Is!* The date is Sunday, 5/31 to Thursday 6/4 from 5:30-8pm. Dinner is served each night followed by Bible stories, music, crafts, and games! Children, youth and adults may register at <https://www.zionhickory.org/vbs-2026>. Volunteers are needed.

Grace will be hosting the *Carolina's Mission District Solid Rock Day Camp* again this year. The dates are **Monday, June 15 – Friday, June 19.** The camp is for children/youth 4K- 5th grade. We will have college age counselors and a seminarian to lead the camp. The hours are 9 am - 4 pm Monday-Thursday, 9 am- 12 noon on Friday. The week will include Bible study, singing, games, crafts, skits, and lots of fun!

Upcoming Dates:

Fri/Sat May 1&2: Carolina's Mission District Convocation in Salisbury, NC.
 Sunday, May 3 Fifth Sunday of Easter
 Sunday, May 10, Sixth Sunday of Easter, Mother's Day, Gifts for Mothers
 Sunday, May 18, Seventh Sunday of Easter / Celebration of the Ascension of Our Lord
 Sunday, May 24, The Day of Pentecost, we will honor our veterans who have died in serving our nation (Memorial Day is Monday, May 25)
 Sunday, May 31 Holy Trinity Sunday
 Sunday, May 31 – Thursday, June 4 Illumination Station VBS (see announcement)
 Sunday, June 7 2nd Sun aft Pentecost
 Sunday, June 14, 3rd Sun aft Pentecost (evening social to welcome Day Campers)
 Mon-Friday, June 15-19, Solid Rock Day Camp Hosted by Grace, 9am-4pm
 Sunday, June 21, 4th Sun aft Pentecost, Father's Day, Gifts for Fathers

GIVING AND ATTENDANCE FOR LAST SUNDAY

Date	Offering		Attendance	
	Total Receipts	General Fund	Worship	Sunday School
4/12/2026	\$ 2,980.00	\$ 1,865.00	37	11

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace
Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard
Lector – Todd Childers Youth Leader – Stormy Shull
Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens & Nicky Jarrett
Communion Assistants – Tina Hefner & Nicky Jarrett
Ushers – Jack Wilfong & Allen Biggerstaff
Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jeff Scronce