

# Grace Notes



Monthly Publication of the Congregational Activities of Grace Lutheran Church in Newton, NC

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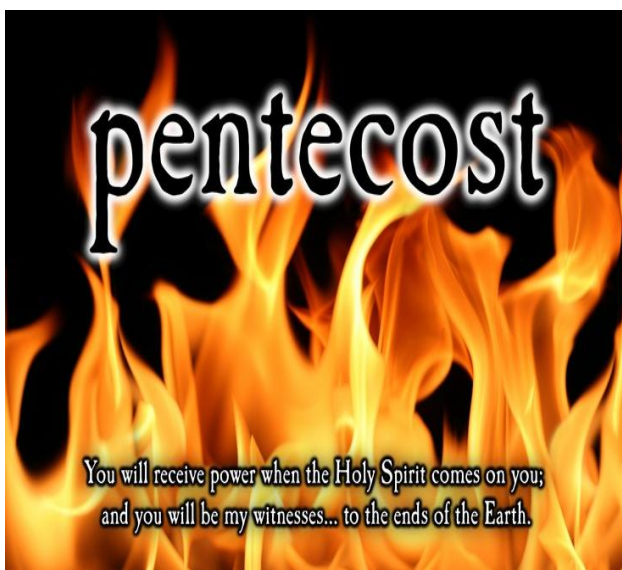
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9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service with Communion

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MAY 2026



## *“The Holy Spirit Calls, Gathers, Enlightens, and Sanctifies!”*

*A Message from Pastor Doug Hefner*

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*John 14:<sup>25</sup> “These things I have spoken to you while I am still with you. <sup>26</sup> But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.” John 15:<sup>26</sup> “But when the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth,*

*who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness about me.<sup>27</sup> And you also will bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.*

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia! It is such a great joy to proclaim this good news, especially as we did on Easter Sunday a few weeks ago. And as we go through the season of Easter (and beyond) we continue to proclaim this good news in word and deed. As we continue in the season of Easter and remember the beautiful resurrection appearances of our Lord that brought new life to us all, there are two things that are so clear: 1. Experiencing the risen Lord and His love changed the disciples forever (and us too) and 2. Having been filled with peace, joy, forgiveness and new life, Jesus each time commissioned them to go into the world to be *His witnesses and disciples!* Here are some examples-

*John 20:21 “As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you” (that is preach the Gospel of love and forgiveness); John 21:15ff Jesus asked Peter three times do you love, Yes Lord he said, then feed and tend my lambs; Matthew 28:10 “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers”; Matthew 28:19-20 “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, , teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always...” And then Luke 24:47-48 after opening their minds to the Scripture, Jesus said to them “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations... YOU ARE WITNESSES OF THESE THINGS.”*



### **Praise and Picnic Sunday, May 3**

**Praise and Picnic Sunday** will be on Sunday, May 3. We will gather in the outdoor pavilion for worship at 10:30am and then we will have a picnic lunch. Grace is providing hot dogs and hamburgers, buns, plates and silverware, and drinks. Each family is asked to bring a covered dish side or dessert to share. At this service of worship we will focus on the resurrection appearance of Jesus from Luke 24:36-49 as we consider our calling as

the body of Christ here at Grace to be witnesses and disciples. We do need volunteers to help with this event! See Pastor Doug.



Please join us on **Mother's Day on Sunday, May 10** as we celebrate and give thanks to God for all mothers and Godly women. I will preach on John 15, “I am the Vine, you are the branches” Jesus said. Jesus calls us to abide in Him and in His Word and love as we love others and live out our faith. Jesus’ message in John 15 will be a blessing for our mothers and Godly women and for all of us as we are called to

bear fruit to glorify the Lord and bless His people.

We will conclude the Easter season as we celebrate Jesus’ Ascension on Thursday, May 14 which we will celebrate on Sunday, May 17. We will focus on Acts 1 and John 17. And on May 24 we will celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit as we enter the Pentecost Season on Sunday, May 24. As we are filled with resurrection power and sent out as witnesses of the Good News, we don’t go alone or without power. Jesus said that He would send another Advocate, the Holy Spirit, to guide, empower, and sanctify us to be

the Church, the body of Christ. Martin Luther said this about the Holy Spirit from his explanation of the Third Article of the Creed: ***“I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him; but the Holy Spirit has called me by the Gospel, enlightened me with His gifts, sanctified and kept me in the true faith; even as He calls, gathers, enlightens, and sanctifies the whole Christian Church on earth, and keeps it with Jesus Christ in the one true faith; in this Christian Church He forgives daily and richly all sins to me and all believers, and at the last day will raise up me and all the dead, and will give to me and to all believers in Christ everlasting life. This is most certainly true.”*** The Holy Spirit is the presence and power of God in us to keep us in true faith, to call us to follow Christ and live in Christ, to gather us together as the fellowship of the faithful finding life in Word and Sacrament, to enlighten us with gifts to be shared for the glory of God and the building up of the people of God, and to sanctify us (to make holy to set apart for a purpose) to grow in holiness and Christ-likeness.

In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit comes upon the disciples and other believers and through Peter’s proclaimed word and through those who hear the gospel. The Spirit gathered them, called them to faith, gave them gifts, and filled them with the Spirit of God. As we continue reading in Acts we see how the Holy Spirit brings God’s power, presence and purpose to the people of God as they live out their faith and share it with others. The Holy Spirit is calling, gathering, enlightening, and sanctifying us, Grace Church and the whole Church, today as well. Like the Church in Acts let us receive with joy the promised Holy Spirit and be passionate about our faith as we share it and live it out in word and deed. I am always thankful for each of you as I see the Spirit of God at work at Grace Church and in your lives. The Holy Spirit sends us out with these gifts to be the people of God in our homes, neighborhoods, schools, work places and public places. May a fresh wind of the Spirit’s grace blow through our lives and may the fire of the Spirit’s love burn brightly in our hearts and lives. I hope all of our mothers and women have a blessed Mother’s Day and on Memorial Day (May 25 but we will recognize Memorial Day on Sun, May 24) let us give thanks for those who gave their lives to protect freedom, life and peace. Don’t forget to join us on Wednesday Evenings for Prayer, Praise and Bible Study as we study the Book of Revelation.

***God bless you and Keep you, Pastor Doug***

### **“The Spirits Calls, Gathers, Enlightens and Sanctifies”**

***9:15am Sunday School; 10:30am Worship Service with Communion***

**May 3, 2026, 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Easter Luke 24:36-53**, As Jesus assured the disciples of His love and presence, He also sent them out to be witnesses and disciples of His love. In

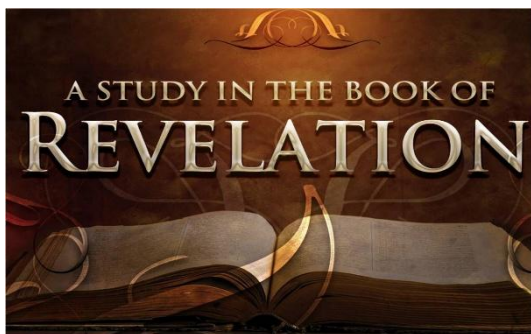
Christ through the power of the Spirit, we can be a cloud of witnesses (Hebrews 12) instead of a cloudy witness.

**May 10, 2026 6<sup>th</sup> Sun of Easter / Happy Mother's Day!** Acts 17; Proverbs 31; 2 Timothy 1:1-14; John 15:1-17. Jesus tells us that He is the Vine and that we are the branches. Connected to Jesus and His love, our lives bear the fruit of His love for the world. Jesus calls us to abide in His love as we love others in His name. We give thanks for mothers who have loved us with God's love and helped us to grow in our faith to bear fruit for Christ. Our other lessons will include *Proverbs 31:10-31* (description of a Godly Woman) and *Acts 16:11-15* (story of Lydia). On this day we will honor all Godly women, especially mothers, and remember with thanksgiving mothers/women who are with the Lord in heaven and now rest from their labors.

**May 17, 2026 7<sup>th</sup> Sun of Easter Acts 1, John 17** The last Sunday of Easter focuses on the Ascension of Christ which occurred 40 days after resurrection (Thursday, May 14). Since we don't normally worship on Thursdays, today we can remember Jesus' ascension, His parting promises and blessing of the people. Jesus promises to not only return some day but he also promises the gift of the Holy Spirit, the advocate, helper, guide, and comforter.

**May 24, 2018 The Day of Pentecost Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 139:1-12; Acts 2:1-21; John 15:26-27, 16:4b-15** We will celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit and the birth of the Church as we remember the Day of Pentecost from *Acts 2:1-21*. Peter, full of the Spirit, began to preach the good news and on that day 3,000 people were moved by the Spirit to put their faith in Christ and be baptized in His name. We pray for God's Holy Spirit to move among us as well, renewing our faith, mission and ministry as the body of Christ, the Church. This is also Memorial Day Weekend; we will give thanks for our veterans, especially those who now rest from their labors and are with the Lord.

**May 31, 2018 Holy Trinity Sunday Isaiah 6:1-8; Psalm 8; Acts 2:22-36; Matthew 28:16-20** On the Sunday of the Holy Trinity, we give thanks to God who reveals Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how they have brought us life as creator, redeemer, and sanctifier. By grace through faith we have been invited into this relationship that brings us new and eternal life. We are baptized in the name of our Triune God and then we are sent forth to live out our faith in the name of our Triune God, which is the Great Commission that Jesus gives to us, the Church.



**WEDNESDAY EVENING VESPERS AND BIBLE STUDY AT 6:30PM.** Please join us as we go verse by verse through the Book of Revelation on Wednesdays, May 6, 13, 20 and 27. We should be ready to start Chapter 6 or 7 for May. We are using the book, “Come Lord Jesus: A Study of Revelation” by Pastor Mark Braaten.



**SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:15AM ON SUNDAY MORNINGS – WE WILL BE WRAPPING UP “THE STORY BIBLE STUDY” (an overview of the Bible) in early May.** We will begin a new Bible Study on the Book of Acts. Along with reading the Book verse by verse, we will see clips of Acts that was put into a drama presentation.

**Carolina’s Mission District Convocation** will be in Salisbury, NC on May 1 and 2 at Christiana Lutheran Church. Pastor Doug will be attending along with our two delegates Kim Parker and Shelia Drum. We will share the highlights of this gathering with you on May 3 and through the bulletin and newsletter.

**Solid Rock Day Camp** will not be held this year. Due to transition of leaders and staff, the camp will not be held this year. The plan is to restart the Day Camp in 2027. Pastor Doug hopes that we can still offer some special events for our youth and families during the summer like a campfire, outdoor movie night or a water day or fun day with inflatables. If you would like to help with some of these events, please see Pastor Doug.

**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 2<sup>nd</sup> Sun aft Pentecost

Sunday, June 14, 3<sup>rd</sup> Sun aft Pentecost (evening social to welcome Day Campers)

Sunday, June 21, 4<sup>th</sup> Sun aft Pentecost, Father's Day, Gifts for Fathers

### **WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR MAY**

❖ Lector	Kim Parker
❖ Ushers	Jacob Jarrett & Jeff Scronce
❖ Communion Assistants	Cindy Bivens & Lula Ingle
❖ Altar Preparation	Cindy Bivens
❖ Offering Tabulators	Todd Childers & Sheila Drum

*Please be mindful of your commitment to serve. If you are unable to fulfill that commitment, be reminded that it is **your** responsibility to find someone to serve in your place.*

### **FLOWER CHART FOR MAY**

**5/3** Jeff Scronce

**5/10** David & Belinda Wilfong

**5/17** Kim Parker

**5/24** Todd Childers

**5/31** Sherry Biggerstaff

If you wish to place flowers on a given Sunday, please list your name on the chart in the narthex. The liturgical color of the day is listed to assist you in selecting flowers appropriate for that Sunday. Please notify the Church Office by the Tuesday prior to your selected Sunday to ensure correct information is printed in the bulletin.

*You are responsible for ordering the flowers from a florist of your choice. If you would like your flowers to be delivered, Kathy's Flowers & Gifts (704-462-1162) in Vale will deliver to our sanctuary at no extra cost.*



*Flowers do not have to be ordered from a florist. Live flowers from a garden center, grocery store, or from your own garden are beautiful also.*

## ATTENDANCE AND GIVING TO OUR LORD'S WORK FOR MARCH

	3/29/26	4/5/26	4/12/26	4/19/26
<b>Sunday School</b>	14	12	7	11
<b>Worship</b>	46	81	41	37
<b>General Fund Offerings</b>	\$1,785	\$3,987	\$2,087	\$2,980

**FRED T. FOARD SENIOR LUNCHEON** will be held on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon at Plateau Community Church. All are invited!

**THE GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST** will be held on Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup> at 9:00am at Four Peas in a Pod Restaurant on Highway 70 in Conover. Great food and great fellowship! Please come and bring a friend!

**THE NEXT MEETING OF THE LEADERSHIP MINISTRY BOARD** is scheduled for Monday, May 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm.

**THE GRACE PRAYER LUNCHEON** will be held on Wednesday, May 20<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 noon in Fellowship Hall. All are invited!

**ASHURE MINISTRY FOOD ASK** for the month of May is pet food. We are doing great things at Grace in helping feed the hungry in our own community. Year-to-date the disciples of Grace have donated 185 pounds of food to Ashure in addition to the giving for our Blessing Box.

Moving forward the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month will be designated as Ashure Sunday. We would like to collect any food donations to help us catch up with our giving at Ashure.

### ***Blessing Box Maintenance & Replenishment Schedule***

**Week 1 – Stewardship Finance Ministry Team**

**Week 2 – Discipleship Ministry Team**

**Week 3 – Worship Ministry Team**

**Week 4 – Stewardship Property Ministry Team**

**Week 5 - (if applicable) – Discipleship Ministry Team**

SHINING A LIGHT ON  
WHO JESUS REALLY IS

# ILLUMINATION STATION

JOHN 8:12

**Vacation Bible School 2026**

Join us for the brightest week of the summer! At Illumination Station, you will explore how light brightens, illuminates, reflects, and reveals while discovering that Jesus is the Light of the World. Through Bible study, music, crafts, and recreation, you will learn that Jesus is the perfect, proven, and powerful Son of God.

*Light up your summer and shine a light on Jesus!*

**For All Ages: Preschoolers, Kids, Teenagers & Adults!**

 Place:

**Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
1911 Zion Church Rd, Hickory, NC

 Date & Time:

**Sunday, 5/31 – Thursday, 6/4**  
**5:30pm – 8:30pm**  
(Dinner from 5:30-6:00pm)

Register Here:



**[zionhickory.org/vbs-2026](https://zionhickory.org/vbs-2026)**