

Fifth Sunday of Easter

May 3, 2026 10:30 AM



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway, Newton, North Carolina 28658

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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 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.

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** “You Servants of God, Your Master Proclaim” LBW 252

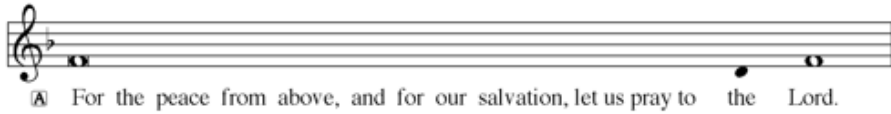
* **GREETING**

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.**

* **KYRIE**



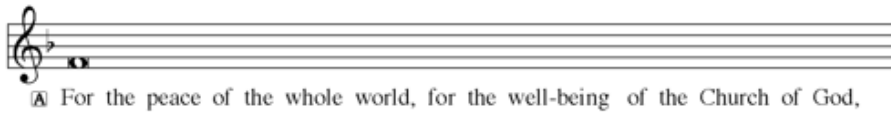
Ⓐ In peace, let us pray to the Lord. ☩ Lord, have mer - cy.



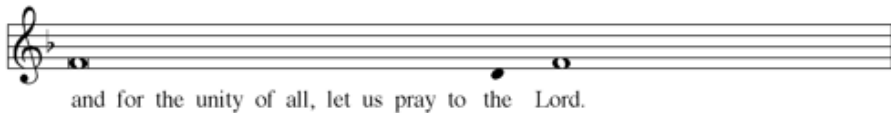
Ⓐ For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



☩ Lord, have mer - cy.



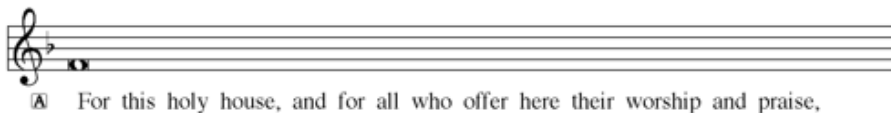
Ⓐ For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God,



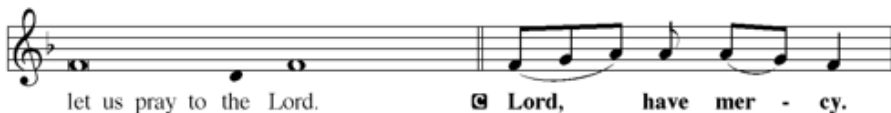
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



☩ 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.



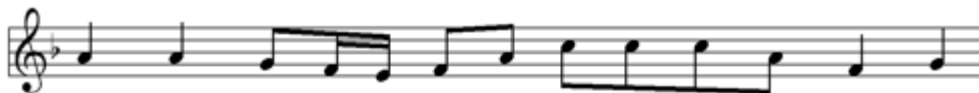
Ⓐ Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. ☩ A - men

* 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.



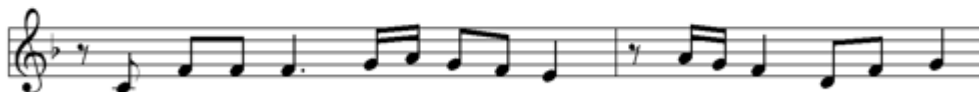
Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God:



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

*** PRAYER OF THE DAY**

P: Holy and righteous God, you are the author of life, and you adopt us to be your children. Fill us with your words of life, that we may live as witnesses to the resurrection of your Son, 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: Nehemiah 8: 1-4a, 5-12

¹ All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had given to Israel. ² Accordingly, Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³ He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand, and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁴ Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that had been made for the purpose. ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people, and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ Then Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Also the Levites helped the people to understand the law, while the people remained in their places. ⁸ So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our Lord, and do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." ¹¹ So the Levites stilled all the people, saying, "Be quiet, for this day is holy; do not be grieved." ¹² And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

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

PSALM 119: 9-8

⁹ How can young people keep their way pure? By guarding it according to your word.

¹⁰ **With my whole heart I seek you; do not let me stray from your commandments.**

¹¹ I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.

¹² **Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes.**

¹³ With my lips I declare all the ordinances of your mouth.

¹⁴ **I delight in the way of your decrees as much as in all riches.**

¹⁵ I will meditate on your precepts and fix my eyes on your ways.

¹⁶ **I will delight in your statutes; I will not forget your word.**

¹⁷ Deal bountifully with your servant, so that I may live and observe your word.

¹⁸ **Open my eyes, so that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.**

SECOND READING: Acts 8: 26-40

²⁶ Then an angel of the Lord said to Philip, “Get up and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.” (This is a wilderness road.) ²⁷ So he got up and went. Now there was an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official of the Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, in charge of her entire treasury. He had come to Jerusalem to worship ²⁸ and was returning home; seated in his chariot, he was reading the prophet Isaiah. ²⁹ Then the Spirit said to Philip, “Go over to this chariot and join it.” ³⁰ So Philip ran up to it and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah. He asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” ³¹ He replied, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he invited Philip to get in and sit beside him. ³² Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this:

“Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb silent before its shearer, so he does not open his mouth.³³ In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation? For his life is taken away from the earth.”

³⁴ The eunuch asked Philip, “About whom, may I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip began to speak, and starting with this scripture he proclaimed to him the good news about Jesus. ³⁶ As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, here is water! What is to prevent me from being baptized?” ³⁸ He commanded the chariot to stop, and both of them, Philip and the eunuch, went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. ³⁹ When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord snatched Philip away; the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing. ⁴⁰ But Philip found himself at Azotus, and as he was passing through the region he proclaimed the good news to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

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”**

C 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: Luke 24: 36-49**

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

While they were talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." ³⁷They were startled and terrified, and thought that they were seeing a ghost. ³⁸He said to them, "Why are you frightened, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?" ³⁹Look at my hands and my feet; see that it is I myself. Touch me and see; for a ghost does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." ⁴⁰And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering, he said to them, "Have you anything here to eat?" ⁴²They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³and he took it and ate in their presence.

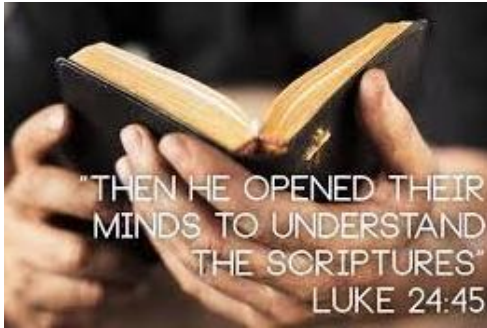
⁴⁴Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you — that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets, and the psalms must be fulfilled." ⁴⁵Then he opened their minds to understand the scriptures, ⁴⁶and he said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Messiah is to suffer and to rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷and that repentance and forgiveness of sins is to be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. ⁴⁸You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹And see, I am sending upon you what my Father promised, so stay here in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



“We Are Witnesses to the Life Transforming Power and Love of the Living Word!”

Pastor Doug

*HYMN OF THE DAY

“I Love to Tell the Story”

LBW 390

*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**

“Christ is Alive! Let Christians Sing”

LBW 363

(verses 1 – 4)

* **DISMISSAL**

P: 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 by Jeff Scronce.



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffry Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Glenda Childers, Pat Dietz, Allen and Kay Hatchett, 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, Ashlee Bumgardner, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, the family of Jim Kilby, Peggy Klutz, Anne Poovey, Randy & Rita Neill, the family of 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 MAY BIRTHDAY TO:

May 11 – Tim Eckard

May 22 – Tawanna Jarrett

May 27 – Jane Robertson

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: Fifth Sunday of Easter

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

Wednesday:

12:00pm – Fred T. Foard Seniors Luncheon at Plateau Community Church

6:30pm – Evening Vespers Service

Saturday:

9:00am – Grace Prayer Breakfast at Four Peas in a Pod in Conover

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.

Upcoming Dates:

- Sunday, May 10, Sixth Sunday of Easter, Mother’s Day, Gifts for Mothers
- Sunday, May 17, 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 Sunday after Pentecost
- Sunday, June 14, 3rd Sunday after Pentecost
- Sunday, June 21, 4th Sunday after Pentecost, Father’s Day, Gifts for Fathers

GIVING AND ATTENDANCE FOR LAST SUNDAY

Date	Offering		Attendance	
	Total Receipts	General Fund	Worship	Sunday School
4/26/2026	\$ 2,272.00	\$ 1,715.00	41	8

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS NEEDED

A sign-up sheet for the months of June, July, August, and September will be circulated this morning. Your participation is much appreciated.

- Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace*
- Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard*
- Lector – Kim Parker Youth Leader – Stormy Shull*
- Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens*
- Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Lula Ingle*
- Ushers – Jacob Jarrett & Jeff Scronce*
- Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Sheila Drum*