

Sixth Sunday of Easter

May 10, 2026 10:30 AM

Happy Mother's Day!

I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15:5

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

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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**

* **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: Life-giving God, through the blessed gift and sacrament of Holy Baptism, you abide in us, even as we abide in you. Through this holy and mutual abiding you give us life in Christ and strengthen and nurture our faith just as a vine gives life to its branches. Help us to grow in Christ so that we may be sent out to bear fruit for the life of the world; through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

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

FIRST READING: Ruth 1: 15-22

¹⁵ So Naomi said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” ¹⁶ But Ruth said, “*Do not press me to leave you, to turn back from following you! Where you go, I will go; where you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people and your God my God. ¹⁷ Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do thus to me, and more as well, if even death parts me from you!*”

¹⁸ When Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her. ¹⁹ So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. When they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them, and the women said, “Is this Naomi?” ²⁰ She said to them,

“Call me no longer Naomi; call me Mara (name means “Bitter”), for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me. ²¹ I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty; why call me Naomi when the Lord has dealt harshly with^[1] me and the Almighty^[2] has brought calamity upon me?”

²² So Naomi returned together with Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, who came back with her from the country of Moab. They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

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

Proverbs 31: 10-30

¹⁰ A woman of strength who can find? She is far more precious than jewels.

¹¹ **The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.**

¹² She does him good and not harm all the days of her life.

¹⁶ **She considers a field and buys it; with the fruit of her hands she plants a vineyard.**

¹⁷ She girds herself with strength and makes her arms strong.

¹⁸ **She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her lamp does not go out at night.**

¹⁹ She puts her hands to the distaff, and her hands hold the spindle.

²⁰ **She opens her hand to the poor and reaches out her hands to the needy.**

²⁵ Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come.

²⁶ **She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.**

²⁷ She looks well to the ways of her household and does not eat the bread of idleness.

²⁸ **Her children rise up and call her happy; her husband, too, and he praises her:**

²⁹ “Many women have done excellently, but you surpass them all.”

³⁰ **Charm is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised.**

SECOND READING: 2 Timothy 1: 1-14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, for the sake of the promise of life that is in Christ Jesus, ²To Timothy, my beloved child: Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. ³I am grateful to God — whom I worship with a clear conscience, as my ancestors did — when I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day. ⁴Recalling your tears, I long to see you so that I may be filled with joy. ⁵I am reminded of your sincere faith, a faith that lived first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice and now, I am sure, lives in you. ⁶For this reason I remind you to rekindle the gift of God that is within you through the laying on of my hands; ⁷for God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline. ⁸Do not be ashamed, then, of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner, but join with me in suffering for the gospel, relying on the power of God, ⁹who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works but according to his own purpose and grace. This grace was given to us in Christ Jesus before the ages began, ¹⁰but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.

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 15: 1-14**

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

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. ² He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. ³ You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. ⁴ Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. ⁵ I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. ⁷ If you abide in me and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. ⁹ As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. ¹¹ I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.

¹² “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. ¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. ¹⁴ You are my friends if you do what I command you.

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

SERMON

“The Faithful, Flourishing, and Fruitful Garden: Godly Mothers and Women are First and Foremost Disciples of and Abiding in the Lord Jesus!”

Pastor Doug



***HYMN OF THE DAY**

Tune of Faith of Our Fathers

1. Faith of our mothers, living still
In cradle song and bedtime prayer;
In nursery lore and fireside love,
Thy presence still pervades the air;
Faith of our mothers, living faith!
We will be true to Christ till death.

2. Faith of our mothers, loving faith,
Fount of our childhood's trust and grace,
Oh, may Thy consecration prove
Source of a finer, nobler race:
Faith of our mothers, living faith
We will be true to Christ till death.

“Faith of Our Mothers”

3. Faith of our mothers, guiding faith,
For youthful longing, youthful doubt,
How blurred our vision, blind our way,
Thy providential care without:
Faith of our mothers, guiding faith,
We will be true to Christ till death.

4. Faith of our mothers, Christian faith,
In truth beyond our stumbling creeds,
Still serve the home and bless the Church,
And breathe Christ's spirit thro' our deeds:
Faith of our mothers, Christian faith!
We will be true to Christ till death.

***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



* **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**

“Joyful, Joyful We Adore Thee”

LBW 551

* **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, in honor of, and in memory of all mothers by David and Belinda Wilfong.



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffrey 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, 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, Pastor Randall Cauble, 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: Sixth 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.

CONGRATULATIONS to Kaitlyn Leonhardt on her graduation from Lenoir-Rhyne University with a bachelor's degree in nursing. The people of Grace extend our warmest wishes for your success in your profession.

Grace is very proud of all our graduates. If you have a graduate in your family or know of one in the Grace Church Family, please let the pastor or office know. During the month of

May we will honor our graduates with our recognition, a gift, and most importantly, our love and prayers.

Upcoming Dates:

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
5/3/2026	\$ 4,226.81	\$ 2,795.00	38	9

THE LIBRARY IS OPEN!

The Grace Library is open and ready to serve you! There are many wonderful books for Christians of all ages. There are resources for children, in-depth Bible study, and inspirations for your quiet time. Please visit the library downstairs in room 3. If you have a suggestion such as a title you would like to see in the library, please leave a note in the suggestion box by the front door.

CHRISTMAS SHOEBOXES AVAILABLE NOW

Many of you like to get an early start on filling shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child. Shoeboxes are now available in the choir pews on the right. A label is inside each shoebox. Thanks for helping with this important ministry.

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

Mother's Day Devotion

Isaiah 66:13 “As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.” This verse invites you to imagine God in the gentle posture of a mother, drawing near to soothe and console. The comfort is intimate and knowing; God understands the particular aches of your heart and reaches toward you with the tenderness of someone who has watched you from the very beginning.

Isaiah 49:15 “Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!” This rhetorical question comforts you with the assurance that God’s memory of you is unfailing. Even if human memory fails or relational wounds happen, you can hold fast to the truth that God does not forget you.

How a Mother’s Love Reflects God’s Love Your experience of a mother’s love gives you tangible language for the ways God loves you. Even if your own experience is complicated or incomplete, the biblical picture draws on familiar, human images to tell a greater story. The parallels are gentle and unmistakable: nurturing that helps you grow, patience that models enduring presence, and sacrificial love that places another’s need above one’s own. In each of these, you can find a glimpse of God’s heart.

Nurturing Care A mother often creates the conditions for life to flourish. You might recall meals prepared with hands that knew your favorites, encouragement when you felt defeated, or a room filled with books and bedtime stories that widened your imagination. That nurturing care is a picture of God who tends his people. God provides what you need to grow spiritually—scripture to feed your soul, people to speak truth and grace into your life, and daily mercies that renew you. When you recognize nurturing in your life, it points you to a God who is not distant or indifferent. He nurtures you with patience and provision. Your growth is not accidental; it is tended by One who cares deeply for each step you take.

Patience / Longsuffering Mothers are often the first teachers of patience. You’ve seen a mom repeating lessons until the kinks were ironed out, listening as you wrestled through hard feelings, or staying up late as you processed grief or joy. That kind of steadiness—steady presence over seasons of failure and growth—mirrors God’s longsuffering toward you. God’s patience is not passive; it’s steadfast and purposeful. He waits while you learn, redirects you gently when you wander, and loves you through the slow work of transformation. If you’ve known a mother who stayed in the hard places with you, you’ve experienced a hint of God’s enduring patience.

Sacrificial Love Perhaps the most striking mirror of God’s love in motherhood is sacrifice. Mothers you know may have set aside dreams, time, rest, or resources so that you could flourish. Sacrificial love doesn’t tally rewards; it seeks the good of another at cost to itself. In Scripture, God’s sacrificial love is the heart of the gospel—giving of Himself for your redemption. When you remember the sacrifices made on your behalf, you’re remembering echoes of the cross: love that chooses the welfare of another above convenience or personal comfort. That sacrificial posture invites you to live with gratitude and to reflect that love toward others.