

Seventh Sunday of Easter

May 17, 2026 10:30 AM



Grace Evangelical 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**

* **GATHERING HYMN**

“A Hymn of Glory Let Us Sing”

LBW 157

(verses 1 – 4)

* **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: Almighty God, Jesus ascended to the throne at your right hand. Help us to trust in his never-ending presence through the promised Holy Spirit, that we may bear witness to your grace until the day we celebrate with all the saints around your throne; through 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: Acts 1: 1-11

¹In the first book, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach, ²until the day when he was taken up, after he had given commands through the Holy Spirit to the apostles whom he had chosen. ³He presented himself alive to them after his suffering by many proofs, appearing to them during forty days and speaking about the kingdom of God. ⁴And while staying with them he ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which, he said, “you heard from me; ⁵for John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.” ⁶So when they had come together, they asked him, “Lord, will you at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?” ⁷He said to them, “It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority. ⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.” ⁹And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. ¹⁰And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, ¹¹and said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same way as you saw him go into heaven.”

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

PSALM 47

¹Clap your hands, all peoples! Shout to God with loud songs of joy!

²**For the LORD, the Most High, is to be feared, a great king over all the earth.**

³He subdued peoples under us, and nations under our feet.

⁴**He chose our heritage for us, the pride of Jacob whom he loves.**

⁵God has gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet.

⁶**Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises!**

⁷For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with a psalm!

⁸**God reigns over the nations; God sits on his holy throne.**

⁹The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham. For the shields of the earth belong to God; he is highly exalted!

SECOND READING: Hebrews 4: 12-16

¹²Indeed, the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account. ¹⁴Since, then, we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested^[e] as we are, yet without sin. ¹⁶Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

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 17: 1-6, 13-26**

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

When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you,² since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. ⁴ I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed. ⁶ "I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

¹³ But now I am coming to you, and I speak these things in the world so that they may have my joy made complete in themselves. ¹⁴ I have given them your word, and the world has hated them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁵ I am not asking you to take them out of the world, but I ask you to protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. ¹⁷ Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you have sent me into the world, so I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ And for their sakes I sanctify myself, so that they also may be sanctified in truth.

²⁰"I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, ²¹that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²²The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, ²³I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. ²⁴Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. ²⁵O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. ²⁶I made known to them your name, and I will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



“And This is Eternal Life, to Know Jesus and His Love”
Pastor Doug

*HYMN OF THE DAY

“Sweet Hour of Prayer”

TCH 640

*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

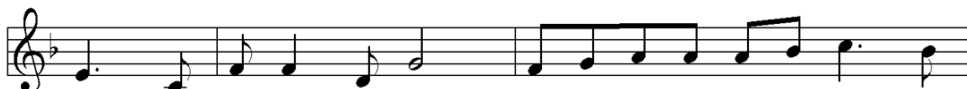
COMMUNION SONG Lamb of God



☞ 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**

“Rejoice, the Lord is King”

LBW 171

* **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 the ladies of Grace Lutheran Church.



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, Braylon's sister, Pastor Randall Cauble, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, the family of Jim Kilby, Luca's Hope, Peggy Klutz, Anne Poovey, Randy & Rita Neill, David Sigmon, 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: Seventh Sunday of Easter

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

Monday: 6:30pm – Leadership Ministry Board

Wednesday:

12:00pm – Grace Prayer Luncheon – Fellowship Hall

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.

Upcoming Dates:

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)

Wednesday, June 3 – Fred T. Foard Seniors Luncheon hosted by Grace

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

	Offering		Attendance	
Date	Total Receipts	General Fund	Worship	Sunday School
5/10/2026	\$ 1,291.00	\$ 1,247.00	45	8

PICTORIAL DIRECTORY

We would like to create a new updated pictorial directory for our congregation. Rather than going to the expense of hiring an outside company to do this we would like to complete this project in-house. But we will need your help. Please email to us a digital photo of your choosing of you and your family members who worship at Grace. It does not have to be a formal portrait but should clearly show everyone's faces. If you do not have one we can help you take one. We would like to put this together as soon as possible so please start sending in your photos now.

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*

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

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Ascension of Our Lord – May 14, 2026

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

- Acts 1:8 -

He Dwells in Us Now

Bob Hope was known throughout the world for his humor, talent, and kind heart. He entertained many generations in movies, television, and with the U.S.O. He gave so much of the himself for the joy of others and he will be remembered for a long time. Though many had heard of him, few knew him personally because it was not practical or logistically possible for one man to call us all friends.

Have you ever wondered what it would have been like if you had known Jesus personally? What might it have been like to hear His voice, eat with Him and follow Him during His ministry on earth? He was God in flesh; couldn't He have stayed among His people forever? Wouldn't He have gained a bigger following if He had stayed? If Jesus continued to live as generation after generation of people died, the world would have truly seen the power of God.

After His resurrection, Jesus stayed with the disciples for forty days, long enough to share a few final thoughts and reinforce their belief that He was truly alive. Then He ascended into heaven, never to be seen again. Jesus in the flesh was like Bob Hope, trapped by time and space in a way that made it impossible for Him to be with all people even for a moment. The world may have heard of Him, but they wouldn't know Him. We can only know Him by the power of the Holy Spirit.

It was necessary for Jesus to be taken into heaven so that He could send the promised One, the Holy Spirit, who now dwells within the hearts of all who believe. Though Jesus is not here in flesh, He is here in a much better way. We all can know Him and take part in His blessings. The Ascension may have been a sad moment for the disciples, for they were losing the flesh and blood presence of their friend and teacher, but it is a most joyous moment for us because it assured that we too would be able to have a personal relationship with our Lord Jesus as He promised.

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