

Grace Notes



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

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

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JUNE 2026

“Filled with the Holy Spirit, Stepping Out in Faith!”

A Pentecost Message from Pastor Doug Hefner

***Joshua 1:9 “The Lord spoke to Joshua: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go.”
The word “graduate” means “step.” So a graduate is a person who has completed another step or milestone in their journey in preparation to take the next step.***

In the Season of Pentecost which begins with the Day of Pentecost (May 23) we celebrate God’s gift of the Holy Spirit that brought the Church to life and empowered the Church to step out in faith to become witnesses of Christ in word and deed (See Acts 2). Now filled with the Holy Spirit, the Church took important steps of faith to answer God’s calling in Christ to be the Church and to be God’s witnesses (rest of Acts). The disciples and early Church could not have done this on their own apart from the power of God made available to them in the gift of the Holy Spirit.

In the Old Testament, God encouraged and empowered His people to make an important step of faith. In Joshua 1, the Lord speaks some very assuring words to Joshua as he is called to assume a very important and demanding role: filling the shoes of Moses as Joshua prepares to lead the people into the promised land. God calls Joshua to meditate on God’s Word and to be obedient to it as God promises to never fail or forsake Joshua and God’s people. Chapter one ends with Joshua assuming leadership and calling the people of God to step out in faith as they prepare to cross the Jordan and face the challenges and blessings ahead. God gave Joshua great courage for a great calling! You can read about the mighty acts that God did through Joshua in the book of Joshua. The book closes with Joshua’s farewell address in chapter 24 as he prepares to die. He encourages the people to remain faithful to the Lord and serve Him with all sincerity. He lifts up himself and his family as an example: *“But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord!”* Like Joshua,

I would like to encourage all fathers and Godly men to step out in faith and to live out their call to be a role model of Christ-like faith and love. ***God bless our fathers and Godly men, especially this month, as they are recognized on Father's Day, June 21! A Happy and Blessed Father's Day to you!***

In the *Acts of the Apostles* (some have said that the title ought to be *The Acts of the Holy Spirit*) we read how the disciples needed courage and confidence to step out in faith. The risen Lord Jesus appeared to them and gave them new life, hope and the assurance of salvation. However, Jesus would no longer be with them in His bodily form as He would ascend to the Father, but he did promise to send the Holy Spirit. On the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit filled the disciples and believers and the Church was born. The presence and power of God in the Holy Spirit gave the disciples and the Church new courage and confidence to step out in faith and be the Church as they proclaimed the gospel in word and deed. As we are filled with the power of the Holy Spirit we too can be courageous and confident in our faith and in our calling to share the love of God in Christ Jesus.

The word "graduate" means "step." So a graduate is a person who has completed another step or milestone in their journey in preparation to take the next step. On June 7 we will honor our graduates with prayers, a blessing, and a gift. Please call me or the office and let us know of the graduates in the Grace Church family! The graduates in our lives have completed an important step in their journey, some through high school graduation and others through graduation from an undergraduate or graduate school. Congratulations and blessings to **Kaitlyn Leonhardt who graduated from LRU with a BS in Nursing!** We congratulate and pray for Kaitlyn and all of our graduates as they complete this step and prepare in faith to take the next step. Some will go on to more education and some will enter the workforce to share their gifts and learning. Like Joshua, remember that God is with you, to give you courage, strength and faith to step out in faith to live out your calling. Remember that Christ is with you through the power of the Holy Spirit who will guide you in the Word so that you will be blessed to be a blessing!

Graduates, Godly Men and All of the Church (you and me): As we all step out in faith, like Joshua and the early Church, God will guide us in the Holy Spirit and will give us His presence, strength and courage. In the song *Borning Cry* God reminds us, ***"I was there to hear your borning cry, I'll be there when you are old, I rejoiced the day you were baptized, to see your life unfold."*** We will continue to rejoice with God to see as our lives unfold step by step, and in grace, love and faith! And we can rejoice, Grace Church family, to see God's love and grace unfold in the life of the body of Christ here at Grace as we continue to take bold steps of faith in the power of the Holy Spirit!

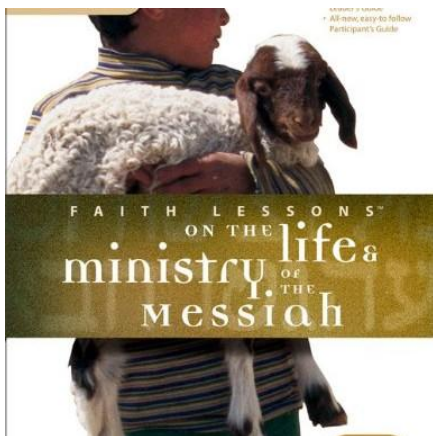
Your fellow servant and witness in Christ, Pastor Doug

God's Peace be with you all, Pastor Doug Hefner

“Sermon Series on the Book of Acts:

Following Jesus in Faith Together in the Power of the Holy Spirit”

Last Summer we did something different as we focused on the Parables of Jesus. This Summer you will need to grab your passport as we are going on a faith journey, one step at a time, with the early Church. We will see how the Spirit-filled and empowered Church began and how it stepped out in faith as they fulfilled Jesus’ calling to become witnesses to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and to the ends of the earth. Starting on June 7 you will get a passport guide to all our stops this summer. We will start in Jerusalem and expand outward to the ends of the earth (Rome) as we learn powerful faith lessons for our own journey of faith to be God’s faithful disciples! We will connect our lessons from Acts to Jesus’ teaching from the Gospel of Matthew, which is our appointed Gospel for this lectionary year! Pack your bags, grab your sunscreen, bring your Bible for the greatest adventure ever, following Jesus as His disciples!



PLEASE JOIN US FOR SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:15AM FOR “FAITH LESSONS ON THE LIFE AND MINISTRY OF THE MESSIAH.”

Pack your bags. We're going on a journey. A quest to uncover Scripture and its meaning across history. Filmed on location in Israel and throughout the Middle East, the Faith Lessons DVD series is an adventure in biblical learning. You will discover why Jesus turned the world upside down with his compelling call to follow him. Teacher and historian Ray Vander Laan brings together history, culture, and geography to illuminate the Gospels. Eight DVD lessons help us to walk with

Jesus through the days of his ministry on this earth. The insights you gain will transform your reading of the Gospels and inspire a deeper faith commitment.

What would it be like to haul in a miraculous draft of fish at the command of the Master . . . or hear the ram's horn sound from Herod's temple at the very moment when Jesus is breathing his last breath? What would you think? How would you think? What meanings would the places and events in the life of Jesus hold for you as a person of a different time and culture? Thanks to Ray Vander Laan and That the World May Know Ministries, you can understand their significance in a way that transforms your faith today. Filmed in Israel, Faith Lessons on the Life and Ministry of the Messiah helps small groups understand Jesus from the mindset of a citizen of those times.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR JUNE

❖ Lector	Stormy Shull
❖ Ushers	Jack Parris & David Wilfong
❖ Communion Assistants	Cindy Bivens & Sheila Drum
❖ Altar Preparation	Cindy Bivens & Susan Setzer
❖ Offering Tabulators	Todd Childers & Kim Parker

*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 JUNE

JUNE 7 Rick Bivens

JUNE 14 Kim Parker

JUNE 21 Lisa Childers Fox

JUNE 28 Frankie Crouse



printed in the bulletin.

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

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 MAY

	4/26/26	5/3/26	5/10/26	5/17/26	5/24/26
Sunday School	8	9	8	9	7
Worship	41	38	45	41	34
General Fund Offerings	\$1,715	\$2,795	\$1,247	\$2,370	\$1,120

Upcoming Dates:

Sunday, June 7 2nd Sun after Pentecost

Sunday, June 14, 3rd Sun after Pentecost

Sunday, June 21, 4th Sun after Pentecost, Father's Day, Gifts for Fathers

SPECIAL SERVICE ON JUNE 7

Please join us for a very special service on June 7 as we welcome "Willow Creek" Blue Grass band to lead worship. Willow Creek has played at over 200 venues (many churches) over the years and have brought joy to many who love to hear their music. The band members are friends and family of Grace - notably Alan and Joe Biggerstaff. The rest of the band includes Tiffany Waters Philbeck, Charlie Pumpny, and Danny Sexton. Please note that the service will be held in Grace Union. Please invite family, friends, and neighbors to this special worship service!

CONGRATULATIONS to Allen and Sherry Biggerstaff on the addition of two new grandchildren to their family! Their daughter Sarah and husband David have recently welcomed a boy and a girl (ages 3 and 4) and we congratulate them as well as their family continues to grow.

FRED T. FOARD SENIOR LUNCHEON will be held on Wednesday, June 3rd at 12:00 noon here at Grace. Volunteers are needed to host our guests. All are invited!

THE GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST will be held on Saturday, June 13th 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, June 15th at 6:00 pm.

ASHURE MINISTRY FOOD ASK for the month of June is cereal. 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 377 pounds of food to Ashure in addition to the giving for our Blessing Box. Moving forward, the 2nd 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.

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.

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.



BLESSING BOX REMINDERS

Here are a few guidelines for the donations: All food items need to be nonperishable and not opened or repackaged. You can donate other items besides food like hygiene supplies, cleaning supplies, and baby needs such as diapers, etc. You may drop items off directly at the Blessing Box. If the Box is filled please put your donation in the plastic tote on the parsonage porch. If the church is open, there is a shelf in the second Sunday School room on the left that will also be an overflow storage area. The food in the overflow will then be placed as needed in the Blessing Box.



The Discipleship Ministry Team will be the group in charge of this ministry. However, we need everyone in the church to donate as you are able and to help restock/check the Blessing Box.

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

Key Impacts on the Community:

- **Emergency Relief:** Because they lack the strict operating hours and paperwork associated with traditional food banks, blessing boxes provide immediate, real-time help. They act as a stopgap for individuals trying to stretch their resources until payday.
- **Absolute Anonymity:** The no-questions-asked model removes the societal stigma often attached to asking for help, allowing struggling individuals to maintain their dignity while getting the supplies they need.

- **Grassroots Generosity:** Blessing boxes cultivate neighborhood solidarity. Local volunteers, churches, and residents take ownership of keeping the boxes stocked, turning community care into a daily, shared habit.

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL 2026 IS HERE!



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