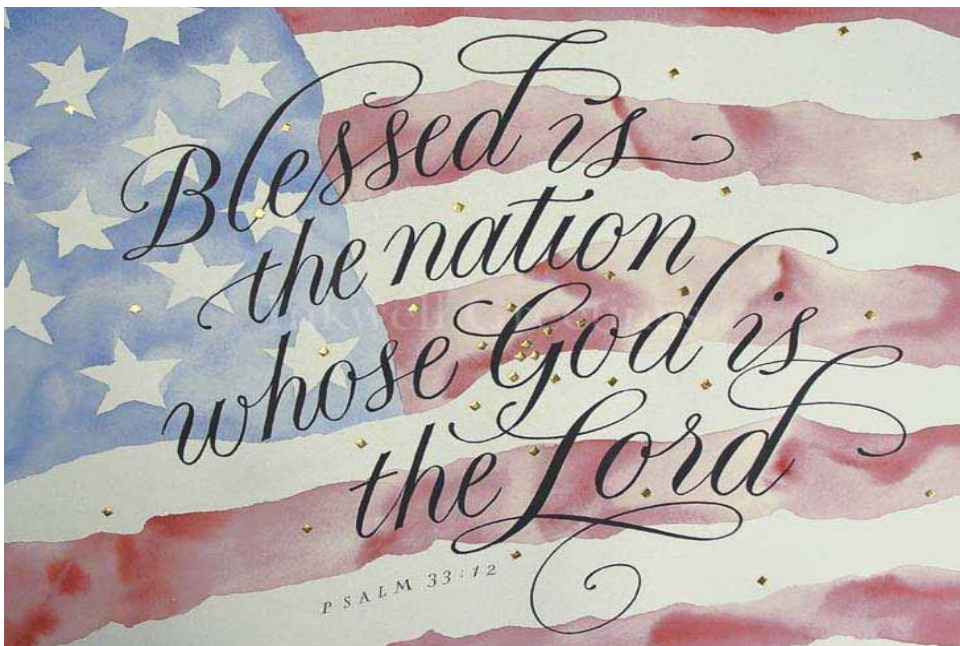


Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

July 5, 2026 10:30 AM



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



NORTH AMERICAN
LUTHERAN
CHURCH

4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway, Newton, North Carolina 28658

Church Office: (704) 462-1035 email: gracenalcnorton@aol.com

www.gracelutheran-newton.org

Rev. Doug Hefner cell: (980) 234-8848 email: pastorhefner@aol.com

Sandi Tallant – Organist Todd Childers – Administrative Assistant

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 8am to 12pm

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

*** 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 God of all mercy and consolation, come to the aid of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that, attentive to your Word, we may confess our sins, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

C Amen.

P In the presence of God, who sees our hearts and our minds, who forgives all our sins, whose mercy endures forever, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection and confession of our sins before God and one another.

P Gracious God,

C have mercy on us. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things done and left undone. Uphold us by your Spirit so that we may live and serve you in newness of life, to the honor and glory of your holy name; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

P Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life in the name of the Father, +Son and 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: Lord of all power and might, you are the author and giver of all good things. Graft into our hearts a love of your name. Increase in us true faith, nourish us with what is good, and watch over all who are in your care. Grant this, we pray, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: Deuteronomy 8:6-20

⁶ So you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God by walking in his ways and by fearing him. ⁷ For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and springs, flowing out in the valleys and hills, ⁸ a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey, ⁹ a land in which you will eat bread without scarcity, in which you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. ¹⁰ And you shall eat and be full, and you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land he has given you. ¹¹ “Take care lest you forget the Lord your God by not keeping his commandments and his rules and his statutes, which I command you today, ¹² lest, when you have eaten and are full and have built good houses and live in them, ¹³ and when your herds and flocks multiply and your silver and gold is multiplied and all that you have is multiplied, ¹⁴ then your heart be lifted up, and you forget the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, ¹⁵ who led you through the great and terrifying wilderness, with its fiery serpents and scorpions and thirsty ground where there was no water, who brought you water out of the flinty rock, ¹⁶ who fed you in the wilderness with manna that your fathers did not know, that he might humble you and test you, to do you good in the end. ¹⁷ Beware lest you say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand have gotten me this wealth.’ ¹⁸ You shall remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your fathers, as it is this day. ¹⁹ And if you forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I solemnly warn you today that you shall surely perish. ²⁰ Like the nations that the Lord makes to perish before you, so shall you perish, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.

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

PSALM 33: 8-12

- ⁸ Let all the earth fear the Lord;
let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!
- ⁹ **For he spoke, and it came to be;
he commanded, and it stood firm.**
- ¹⁰ The Lord brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;
he frustrates the plans of the peoples.
- ¹¹ **The counsel of the Lord stands forever,
the plans of his heart to all generations.**
- ¹² Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,
the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

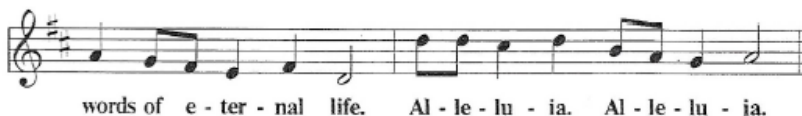
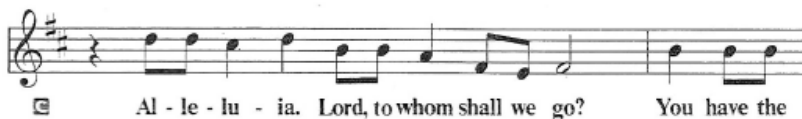
SECOND READING: Galatians 5:1, 13-17

For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery. ¹³For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. ¹⁴For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another. ¹⁶Live by the Spirit, I say, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

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"**



***GOSPEL: John 8: 31-36**

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

³¹ So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, ³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” ³³ They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free?’” ³⁴ Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who practices sin is a slave^[b] to sin. ³⁵ The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. ³⁶ So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

***God Bless America by Irving Berlin**

**God bless America, land that I love
Stand beside her and guide her
Through the night with the light from above**

**From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home**

**From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home
God bless America, my home sweet home**

SERMON



***“Blessed is the Nation Whose God is the Lord:
The Gift and Responsibility of Freedom! Happy
250th Birthday, America!”
Pastor Doug***

***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**

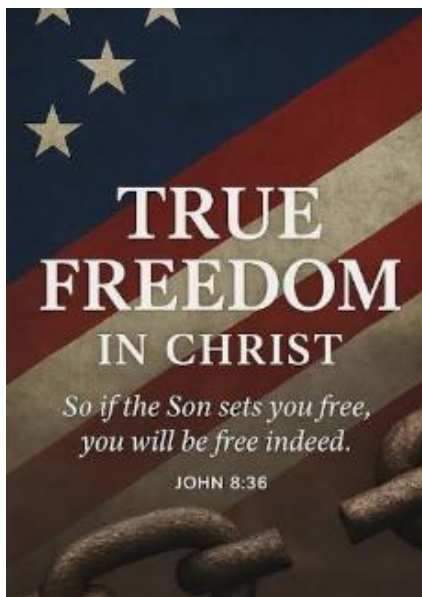
Response at the end of each petition. P: Lord in your mercy, **C: Hear our prayer.**

***SHARING THE PEACE OF CHRIST**

P: The peace of Christ be with you always. **C: And also with you.**

Worshipers 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 – ourselves, our time, and our possessions, signs of your gracious love. Receive them for the sake of Him who gave 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.

***PREFACE PRAYER** “It is indeed right and salutary . . . “

LBW p. 68

*HOLY, HOLY, HOLY



☐ Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might:
Heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

* WORDS OF INSTITUTION

* LORD'S PRAYER

* 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.

The congregation is invited to stand.

*** COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: Gracious God, in this meal you have drawn us to your heart, and nourished us at your table with food and drink, the body and blood of Christ. Now send us forth to be your people in the world, and to proclaim your truth and freedom this day and evermore, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

*** BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and + give you peace.

***SENDING HYMN**

“God Bless Our Native Land”

LBW 569

***DISMISSAL**

P: Christ has given us true freedom! Let us go in peace and joy to live in the gift of freedom and proclaim liberty in Christ by loving our neighbor. **C: Thanks be to God!**

POSTLUDE

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God and in loving memory of Richard and Lucille Scronce by Jeff Scronce.



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffrey Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, the family of Glenda Childers, Pat Dietz, Nelson & Sue Fulbright, 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 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, family of Mike Cline, the family of Flossie Hatley, Chris Keiper, Dennis Morgan, Randy & Rita Neill, Jolene Heavner Shuford, the family of Richard Ramsey, and Scott Speagle. 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 JULY BIRTHDAY TO:

July 13 Lorene Heavner	July 13 Frankie Crouse	July 18 Emily Sipe
July 20 Michael Scronce	July 22 Scott Whisnant	July 22 Nicky Jarrett
July 24 Sherry Biggerstaff	July 27 Jack Wilfong	July 28 Harvey Leatherman
July 30 Shirley Warlick		

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK:

Today: Sixth Sunday After Pentecost

9:15am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

Saturday:

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

1:00pm – 90th Birthday Celebration for Lorene Heavner – Fellowship Hall

UPCOMING DATES:

Please review these dates and provide feedback or additional dates to Pastor Doug and the Board. Once the dates are finalized, we will share this information with the community in a postcard mailing.

- +*Sun., Aug. 23, Back to School Service 10:30am, Blessing of Backpacks, Picnic*
- + *Sun., Sept. 13 Grandparents Sunday, 10:30am – Gift/Prayers/Blessing for Grandparents*
- + *Sun, Sept 20 Homecoming Worship Service followed by Covered Dish Luncheon in Shelter*
- +*Sun., Oct. 4 Food for the Poor Sunday 10:30am; Catawba Co. Walk for Hunger 3pm*
- + *Sun., Oct. 11 4pm Blessing of the Animals Service at Grace Outdoor Shelter*
- + *October Possible Bazaar (Yard sale) with Octoberfest foods as a fundraiser for hunger.*
- + *Sun, Oct. 25 Reformation Sunday Service at 10:30am*
- + *Sat., Oct. 31, Grace Fall Festival and Trunk or Treat 5pm-7pm*
- + *Sunday, Nov. 1, 10:30am All Saints' Day Service, Worshippers light a candle in remembrance of a loved one in heaven.*
- + *Nov. 22 Christ the King Sunday 10:30am, Last Sunday in Church Year*
- + *Wed, Nov. 25 Community Thanksgiving Service 6pm Dinner, 7pm Worship*
- + *Nov. 29 Advent Season 11/29-12/24 begins with First Sunday of Advent.*
- + *Sat., Dec. 6 – Breakfast with Santa, Pancakes with fixings, Crafts, Music, Storytime*
- + *Thur., Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight and Holy Communion Service 5pm*
- + *Sun., Jan. 3, 2027 New Year's Sunday Service, 10:30am*

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 (gracenalnewton@aol.com) 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.

ASHURE MINISTRY FOOD ASK for the month of July is snacks for kids. 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 519 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.

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. Also, special offering envelopes are now available in the Narthex for your gifts. Shipping costs for each shoebox is \$10. Please use these envelopes when your offering includes shipping costs.

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace
Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard
Lector – Tim Eckard Youth Leader – Stormy Shull
Altar Preparation – Betty Wilfong
Communion Assistants – Sheila Drum & Betty Wilfong
Ushers – Jeff Scronce & Jack Wilfong
Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jason Yoder

Listening for the Promise

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost (Proper 9) – July 5, 2026

“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

- Matthew 11:28-30 -

Imagine horseback riding along a quiet country road lined with an overgrowth of wildflowers or hiking endless trails atop mountains overlooking deep blue- and purple-colored canyons. Oh, the possibilities! Summer is a traditional time when most people plan their vacations to get away from their work; a time to rest and relax! The reality of escaping work for a while is that it will be there when you get back! In the text today, we are invited to a different kind of rest which goes beyond getting away for a little while.

We are personally invited with the words, “Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.” The phrase, “Come to me” is a very personal way to invite someone and yet, God uses them. How does this invitation make you feel? Our Lord wants us to recognize that he is always with us, so he asks us to come, rest, and intentionally be in his presence.

God’s invitation is a call to believe and a call to a committed fellowship with Christ. As disciples, we are continually being formed and shaped by the one who created us and calls us into service. But this can be tiring, even as it is exciting and wonderful. So, we are instructed by our Lord to, “Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” As our faith in Christ and relationship with him grows, he will give us rest from our weariness and burdens.

How wonderful it is to know God loves us so much that he loves to be with us and hear from us. God also wants to show us how to have peace even in the midst of hardships or problems in this world. When we take rest in God’s presence and dwell there every day, we are transformed by his love and mercy. Christ will make us more Christ-like in our thoughts and actions. He will give us what we need for the day and that includes rest and restoration. When we rest in him, he restores our lives and teaches us how to live peacefully in a busy world that seeks to keep us moving and working and thinking all the time. Amen.

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