

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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AUGUST 2026

What Footprint of Faith Are You Leaving Behind You?

Message by Pastor Doug Hefner



“That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind” said Neil Armstrong 57 years ago July 20, 1969 as he became the first person to step on the moon. Three brave astronauts (Neil Armstrong, Buzz Aldrin, and Michael Collins) lifted off from earth on July 16, 1969 and spent four days traveling to the moon. The landing and first step took place on a Sunday evening at 10:56 pm EDT and was watched by an estimated 1 billion people around the world.

President Nixon said that it “the longest 22 seconds of my life.” When Buzz Aldrin stepped out onto the moon, he said “Beautiful view!” The two astronauts were on the surface of the moon for 21 hours and 36 minutes. Neil and Buzz were the first to leave footprints on the moon. They planted an American flag and a plaque which reads: *“Here men from the planet Earth first set foot upon the moon. July 1969 A.D. We came in peace for all mankind.”* After collecting 44 pounds of rock samples and conducting several experiments, they prepared for their journey back to earth on July 24. America and the world marveled at the successful mission. In 1961, President John F. Kennedy challenged America to be the first to land on the moon. He predicted that it would

happen within the upcoming decade and it did. He said that the men who would step out on the moon would be stepping out for all Americans as it would take all Americans to send them. That goal and dream was realized.

That historic voyage left more than just footprints on the moon's surface, **it inspired our nation and world to see that when we work together we can do great things.** Landing on the moon took many thousands of people, indeed a nation, working together, using their talents and gifts in creating technology that would take 3 astronauts to the moon and back. It took the vision of a president, the support of the American people and congress, the ingenuity of NASA, and the bravery of 3 astronauts who risked their very lives. Now 57 years later, it is amazing to think that the smart phone that we carry in our pocket everyday is 32,000 times faster (some 120 million times faster), 286 times lighter, and has a much higher storage capacity (Apollo's computer was 64 kB – Some phones have as much as 2 TB or Terrabytes, my phone has 512 GB or giga bytes which has 7.5 million times more storage). The race to space has created many new technologies that have improved our lives and helped humanity as we all continue our space voyage on the planet earth.



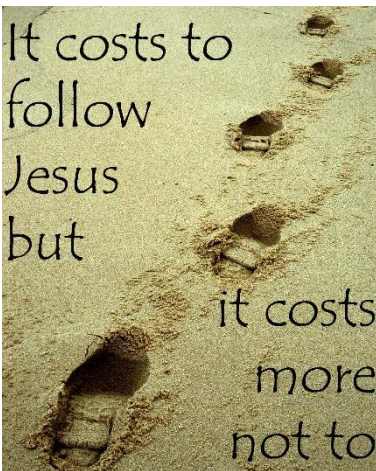
As we stop and reflect upon the footprints left behind by Armstrong and Aldrin and all of the people that helped make that possible, it is also important for us to reflect upon the footprints that we leave behind as well. ***Where are we stepping out in faith as God calls and leads us to live out our faith in ways that change our lives and those***

with whom we share the Gospel.

Last August God led me to share an outreach ministry with you called **“Pray and Go.”** It was a 30-day prayer and outreach journey challenge to be the Great Commission Christians that God has called us to be in Christ! The hope was that this resource would challenge us to see that prayer and sharing our faith (making disciples) is not just something we do for 30 days. In fact, it is a life-long adventure, something that is a part of our everyday life!!!! Let's get that book out again and challenge ourselves once again to take everyday steps to reach out to others with the Gospel and invite them to worship with us. This can seem scary and impossible but remember we don't walk alone... in the fullness of time, God came among us in Christ to walk upon this earth. Jesus said to the 12 disciples and many others, “Come follow me!” These early followers walked in the footsteps of the Savior as He lead the way in teaching them and involving them in

ministry and mission. Jesus concludes the call of the Great Commission (read Matthew 28:16-20) with this promise: “And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

One of the most beautiful ways that we are walking in Christ’s footsteps and leaving a footprint of grace and love is the love, help, and hospitality that we gave to a homeless mother and daughter that came to us toward the end of May. Over the course of two months, we came along side of this family who had great anxiety and fear about their future and basic needs. In Christian love we provided support, food, housing, funds, and transportation. This past week this family came to me to give me the fellowship hall back to me as they were moving into their new home. It was a moment of sadness because I have enjoyed having neighbors right beside me! Mostly though, it was a moment of joy and thanksgiving to God, as this family is successfully moving forward with their life with transportation, a job (income), and a house! They plan to continue worshipping with us and walking with us in faith. Now my prayer is that God would send us another family that we can come alongside of and share the love of Jesus.



This Summer God has led me to preach a sermon series on the 12 Minor Prophets of the Old Testament (Basically the last 12 books of the Old Testament). I have already touched on the message of Jonah. On July 26 I will talk about the message of Micah and then on August 2, the message of Hosea. Like the other heroes of the faith (see Hebrews 11 like Moses, David, Gideon, etc.) who stepped out in faith, these prophets (the minor and the major) followed God in faith and lived out their faith in powerful ways as they proclaimed and lived the Word of God! These people were ordinary people who put their faith in our extraordinary God and therefore left **footprints of faith** for us to follow in and from which we can learn.

The Hall of the Faithful in Hebrews 11 leads us to the greatest Hero of our Faith: Jesus Christ our Lord. In Hebrews 12 we read: ***Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, who for the sake of the joy that was set before him endured the cross, disregarding its shame, and has taken his seat at the right hand of the throne of God.*** Jesus is our ultimate hero as He faithfully lives out God’s will with full obedience and sacrificial love as He reveals God’s love in His life, ministry, suffering

and death on the cross, resurrection and glorious ascension. Jesus has left the ultimate “footprint” (His legacy, i.e. gift of salvation in Him and relationship with Him in the power of the Holy Spirit) for us to receive, live in and follow each day. In fact, Jesus is with us now and walking with us each day – forgiving, renewing, leading, empowering, and calling us to follow Him in faith!

This leads to some important questions for our Grace Church family to consider:

What goals or dreams is God calling us (you) to accomplish in our day and time? Are we (you) taking the step of faith to trust God with your time, talents and treasure? What are the footprints we (you) are leaving behind to bless others and point them to Christ and His love, grace and salvation? Are we (you) willing to work together with our (your) fellow brothers and sisters in Christ here at Salem and beyond to answer God’s call to proclaim the Good News in word and deed? As ordinary people putting their faith in an extraordinary God, do you believe that God can use us to impact our present and future generations? What small steps or even giant leaps of faith are you willing to take?

Jesus our Lord took a giant step for us in coming to earth from heaven to show us God’s will and way and to die for our sins so that we could be reconciled to God and one another. His mission was successful as He conquered sin and death and the devil. He grants to all who believe in Him new and eternal life. We are indeed surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses: faithful heroes from the Bible, faithful men and women that we have known and now rest from their labors, and the faithful in the Church today. As we follow the Lord in faith and walk together with the encouragement of this great cloud of witnesses, I know that God can accomplish great things... indeed greater things than a moon landing. Let us continue to learn from the Lord ***“the pioneer and perfecter of our faith”***, from the lives of the heroes of faith, and from one another as we leave footprints of faith that glorify God and build up Christ’s Church!

*In Christ’s Love,
Pastor Doug*

Pastor Doug's Sunday Sermon Series:

9:15am Sunday School- Lessons from Bible filmed in the Holy Lands

10:30am Worship Service (Word and Sacrament-Holy Communion)

“God's Message of Love in the Twelve Minor Prophets”

August 2, 2026 10th Sun aft Pentecost, Read the book of Hosea On this Sunday we will look at the beautiful and challenging book of Hosea (name means “Salvation”). Hosea is a message of repentance, especially to Israel, for which God includes Hosea's personal circumstances: He has to marry a prostitute and his children are given prophetic names. Because Israel is unfaithful, it will lose its direct relationship of blessing with God. However, God does not give up on His people – God pursues us and seeks to redeem us. Repentance opens the way back to God, who is and remains faithful.

August 10, 2026, 11th Sun aft Pentecost, Read the book of Amos Brief biographical elements, visions, and an announcement of judgment to a whole series of nations – including Judah and Israel. Because of injustice, indifference, and formalistic worship, the people will be judged by God, but a faithful remnant will be blessed.

August 16, 2026, 12th Sun aft Pentecost, Read the book of Zephaniah. Zephaniah reminds us that the “day of the Lord” is near, it will bring judgment for the nations, but also for Israel and Judah. The prophet's main focus is on Jerusalem: its state at that time, which is worthy of judgment, contrasting with the future blessing that the faithful remnant will receive there.

August 23, 2026, 13th Sun aft Pentecost, Back to School Blessing for Students, School Staff, and Parents, Read the Book of Haggai. Haggai is an exhortation to the Jews who have returned from captivity to start building the neglected temple again. After they have done so, Haggai encourages them by pointing to God's help and the prospect of a glorious future.

August 30, 2026 14th Sunday after Pentecost, Read the Books of Obadiah and Nahum.

Obidiah is a message of merciless judgment on Edom because of its arrogance and hatred of Israel. God will avenge Israel and establish his kingdom in Zion. Nahum is a message of judgment against the city of Nineveh, which stands for the entire Assyrian kingdom. Over 100 years after Jonah, God's patience with Nineveh has come to an end because

their repentance did not last. When God judges Assyria, He will restore the glory of Israel.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS FOR AUGUST

❖ Lector	Todd Childers
❖ Ushers	Jacob Jarrett & Tim Leatherman
❖ Communion Assistants	Shelly Scronce & Nicky Jarrett
❖ Altar Preparation	Frankie Crouse
❖ Offering Tabulators	Todd Childers & Gary Leatherman

*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 AUGUST

AUGUST 2	Kim Parker	AUGUST 9	Stormy Shull
AUGUST 16	Frankie Crouse	AUGUST 23	Sherry Biggerstaff
AUGUST 30	Tawanna Jarrett		

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 printed in the bulletin.

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.

Please remember to pick up your flowers after worship. If you do not want them at home our shut-ins would love them or a donation to a nursing home would also be greatly appreciated.

ATTENDANCE AND GIVING TO OUR LORD'S WORK FOR JULY

	6/28/26	7/5/26	7/12/26	7/19/26
Sunday School	7	8	9	13
Worship	34	36	46	33
General Fund Offerings	\$1,175	\$1,510	\$1,944	\$1,075

Upcoming Dates:

- +Sun, Aug. 2: *Wilfong Family Reunion – Fellowship Hall – 1:00pm*
- +Sun, Aug. 16: *Leonard Family Reunion – Fellowship Hall – 1:00pm*
- +Sun., Aug. 23: *Back to School Service 10:30am, Blessing of Students & Teachers, Birthday Luncheon for Betty Wilfong's 80th! The Congregation is invited – bring a dish to share.*
- +Sun., Sept. 13: *Grandparents Sunday, 10:30am – Gift/Prayers/Blessing for Grandparents*
- +Wed., Sept. 16: *Grace Senior Luncheon – 12:00pm*
- +Sun, Sept 20: *Homecoming Worship Service followed by Covered Dish Luncheon in Shelter*
- +Sat., Oct. 3: *Blessing of the Animals Service at Grace Outdoor Shelter 5:00pm*
- +Sun., Oct. 4: *Food for the Poor Sunday 10:30am; Catawba Co. Walk for Hunger 3:00pm*
- +October Possible Bazaar (Yard sale) with Octoberfest foods as a fundraiser for hunger.
- +Wed., Oct. 21: *Grace Senior Luncheon – 12:00pm*
- +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.*
- +Sun, Nov. 15: *Whisnant Family Reunion – Fellowship Hall – 1:00pm*
- +Wed., Nov. 18: *Grace Senior Luncheon – 12:00pm*
- +Nov. 25: *Christ the King Sunday 10:30am, Last Sunday in Church Year*
- +Wed, Nov. 25: *Community Thanksgiving Service 6pm Dinner, 7pm Worship*
- +Sat., Nov. 28: *Hanging of the Greens, 10:00 am*
- +Nov. 29: *Advent Season 11/29:12/24 begins with First Sunday of Advent.*
- +Wed., Dec. 2: *Fred T. Foard Seniors Luncheon – 12:00pm at Grace*
- +Sat., Dec. 6: *Breakfast with Santa, Pancakes with fixings, Crafts, Music, Storytime*
- +Wed., Dec. 16: *Grace Senior Luncheon – 12:00pm*
- +Thur., Dec. 24: *Christmas Eve Candlelight and Holy Communion Service 5pm*
- +Sun., Jan. 3, 2027: *New Year's Sunday Service - 10:30am*

We need each of you to help with these ministry / mission opportunities. Let us know how you want to lead and help with these events. Thank you!

FRED T. FOARD SENIOR LUNCHEON will be held on Wednesday, August 5th at 12:00 noon at Laurel Hill UMC. All are invited!

THE GRACE PRAYER BREAKFAST will be held on Saturday, August 8th 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, August 17th at 6:00 pm.

ASHURE MINISTRY FOOD ASK for the month of August is canned food with pop tops. 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 461 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.

CATAWBA COUNTY HUNGER WALK

Ashure Ministry, Hickory Soup Kitchen, and The Corner Table are proud to come together to host the 2026 Catawba County Hunger Walk! We invite you to join us for this meaningful community event dedicated to fighting hunger right here in Catawba County. Proceeds from this year's walk will support all three organizations as we work together to provide food, hope, and dignity to our neighbors facing food insecurity.

The Hunger Walk is more than just a fundraiser—it's a powerful way to bring our community together while raising awareness about the ongoing challenge of hunger in our area. We humbly ask for your support. Every dollar raised will be divided equally among Ashure Ministry, Hickory Soup Kitchen, and The Corner Table, and every dollar goes directly toward helping feed those who need it most.

Thank you for standing with us in this shared mission of compassion and care. Together, we can take meaningful steps toward ending hunger in Catawba County. All walkers who register and raise a minimum of \$25 before August 30th will receive a walk t-shirt. David and Belinda Wilfong are our church team captains. Please reach out to David and Belinda

if you have any questions. Paper registration forms are available in the Narthex and should be returned to David or Belinda Wilfong. If you choose to register online, please visit cchungerwalk.com and register under our team name which is ***Grace Lutheran NALC Newton***. The password is ***hungerwalk2026\$\$*** and is required for online registration. The forms required are also included in this newsletter.

FOOD FOR THE POOR SUNDAY IS OCTOBER 4, 2026



Our purpose is to bring urgent relief to vulnerable families affected by poverty. We designed our assistance programs to empower our beneficiaries to become self-sufficient and ultimately inspire them to build strong communities so their members can help each other. We constantly seek simple, efficient strategies to fight hunger and poverty without adversely impacting our aid recipients or their country. While our charity organization was founded on the religious principle that it is our moral duty to clothe and feed the poor (Matthew 25:40), Food For The Poor is neutral, impartial, apolitical, and encompasses all religions and beliefs. FFTP holds preserving human dignity and caring for those in need as a universal value. Our short-term focus is to demonstrate that poverty is not inevitable and that people can break out of poverty with the proper assistance. We partner with subject matter experts, local and international NGOs, universities and colleges, churches, and service organizations to achieve our goal.

Please join us on Sunday, October 4, as we welcome a special guest from Food For The Poor.

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 for 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. If you would like someone to take a picture for you please see Todd Childers immediately after worship.

MAINTENANCE TECHNICIAN

Grace is in need of a skilled and reliable maintenance technician or handyman to call upon on an “as needed” basis. Many projects around our campus need attention so it would be very helpful to have such a person readily available. If you know someone who can complete these projects with a high degree of excellence in a reasonable timeframe at a reasonable cost, please have them contact the church office.

SAFETY UPDATE

In order to maintain a safe environment for all who worship at Grace, the Board has decided that beginning on Sunday, August 2nd, the ushers will lock the front doors at 10:45am. Please share any other ideas you have that might enhance the safety and security of our Congregation by jotting them down and placing them in the suggestion box found in the Narthex.

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



REGISTRATION FORM

Who are you registering?



Adult, 18+



Minor, Under 18

Name: _____

Parent/Gardians Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City, State Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Gender: M F

Team/Church: _____

Shirt Size (circle): YS YM YL AS AM AL AXL A2X A3X

Which route do you plan on walking: ☐ 5K ☐ 1-Mile

Visit cchungerwalk.com to register online

THANK YOU FOR WALKING!

Waiver

In consideration of you accepting this entry, I, the participant, intending to be legally bound do hereby waive and forever release any and all rights and claims for damages or injuries that I may have against the Event Director, RunSignup.com, Ashure Ministry, The Corner Table, Hickory Soup Kitchen and all of their agents assisting with the event, sponsors and their representatives, volunteers and employees for any and all injuries to me or my personal property. This release includes all injuries and/or damages suffered by me before, during or after the event. I recognize, intend and understand that this release is binding on my heirs, executors, administrators, or assignees.

I know that participating in this type of event is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter and walk unless I am medically able to do so and properly trained. I assume all risks associated with participating in this event including, but not limited to: falls, contact with other participants, the effects of weather, traffic, and course conditions, and waive any and all claims which I might have based on any of those and other risks typically found in participating in this event. I acknowledge all such risks are known and understood by me. I agree to abide by all decisions of any walk official relative to my ability to safely complete the event. I certify as a material condition to my being permitted to enter this race that I am physically fit and sufficiently trained for the completion of this event and that a licensed Medical Doctor has verified my physical condition.

In the event of an illness, injury or medical emergency arising during the event I hereby authorize and give my consent to the Event Director to secure from any accredited hospital, clinic and/ or physician any treatment deemed necessary for my immediate care. I agree that I will be fully responsible for payment of any and all medical services and treatment rendered to me including but not limited to medical transport, medications, treatment and hospitalization.

Further, I grant permission to all the foregoing to use my name, voice and images of myself in any photographs, motion pictures, results, publications or any other print, videographer or electronic recording of this event for legitimate purposes.

We reserve the right to postpone or cancel the event due to circumstances beyond our control such as a natural disaster or emergency or as required to protect the safety of participants and staff. We reserve the right to change the details of the event without prior notice.

By submitting this entry, I acknowledge (or a parent or adult guardian for all children under 18 years) having read and agreed to the above release and waiver including the no refund policy.

Signature_____ Date_____
(Parent/Guardian signature for minors)