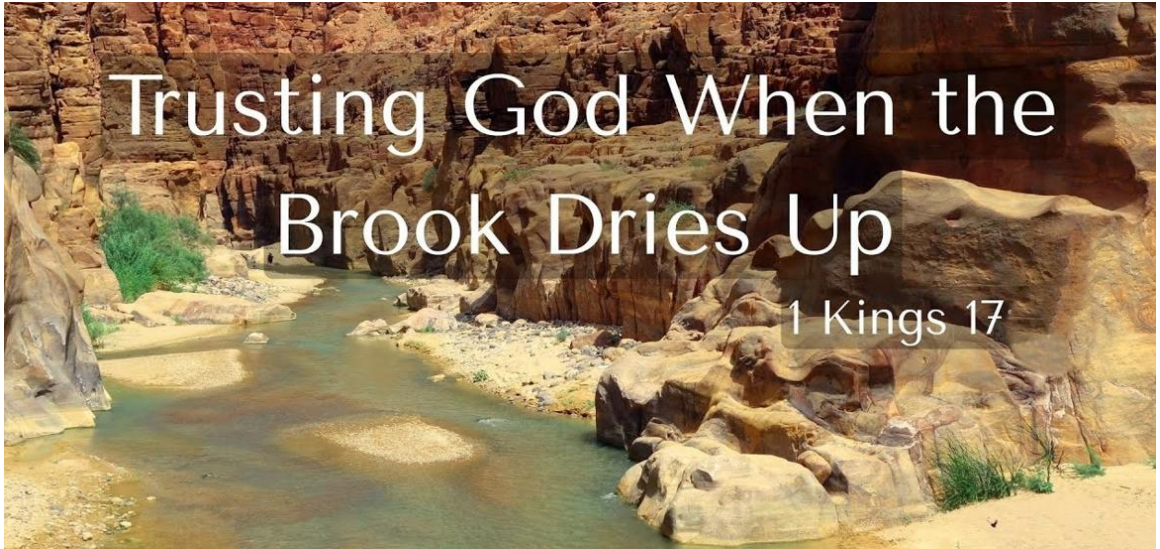


Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost



September 27, 2026 10:30 AM

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church



4536 Hickory Lincolnton Highway, Newton, North Carolina 28658

Church Office: (704) 462-1035 email: gracenalcnewton@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 spirit and 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

*** CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS**

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, Father, +Son, and Holy Spirit, who forgives all our sin, whose mercy endures forever. **C: Amen.**

P: God of all mercy and consolation, come to the help of your people, turning us from our sin to live for you alone. Give us the power of your Holy Spirit that we may confess our sin, receive your forgiveness, and grow into the fullness of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **C: Amen.**

P: Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.

P: Gracious God, **C: have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins, known and unknown, things we have done and things we have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.**

P: In the mercy of almighty God, Jesus Christ was given to die for us, and for his sake God 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: Let us pray. Gracious God, you have placed within the hearts of all your children a longing for your word and a hunger for your truth. As we hunger and thirst for righteousness, grant that we may know your Son to be the true bread of heaven and share this bread with all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **C: Amen.**

The congregation may be seated.

FIRST READING: 1 Kings 17: 1-16

Now Elijah the Tishbite, of Tishbe in Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord the God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall be neither dew nor rain these years, except by my word.” ² The word of the Lord came to him, saying, ³ “Go from here and turn eastward, and hide yourself by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. ⁴ You shall drink from the wadi, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there.” ⁵ So he went and did according to the word of the Lord; he went and lived by the Wadi Cherith, which is east of the Jordan. ⁶ The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning and bread and meat in the evening, and he drank from the wadi. ⁷ But after a while the wadi dried up because there was no rain in the land. ⁸ Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, ⁹ “Go now to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and live there, for I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” ¹⁰ So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks; he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, so that I may drink.” ¹¹ As she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹² But she said, “As the Lord your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of meal in a jar and a little oil in a jug; I am now gathering a couple of sticks so that I may go home and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.” ¹³ Elijah said to her, “Do not be afraid; go and do as you have said, but first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For thus says the Lord the God of Israel: The jar of meal will not be emptied and the jug of oil will not fail until the day that the Lord sends rain on the earth.” ¹⁵ She went and did as Elijah said, so that she as well as he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The jar of meal was not emptied, neither did the jug of oil fail, according to the word of the Lord that he spoke by Elijah.

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

PSALM 145: 10-17

¹⁰All your works shall praise you, O LORD, and your faithful ones shall bless you.

¹¹**They shall tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your power,**

¹²that all people may know of your power and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.

¹³**Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom; your dominion endures throughout all ages. You, LORD, are faithful in all your words, and loving in all your works.**

¹⁴The Lord upholds all those who fall and lifts up those who are bowed down.

¹⁵**The eyes of all wait upon you, O LORD, and you give them their food in due season.**

¹⁶You open wide your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing.

¹⁷**You are righteous in all your ways and loving in all your works.**

SECOND READING: James 5: 13-18

¹³Are any among you suffering? They should pray. Are any cheerful? They should sing songs of praise. ¹⁴Are any among you sick? They should call for the elders of the church

and have them pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord. ¹⁵The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up, and anyone who has committed sins will be forgiven. ¹⁶Therefore confess your sins to one another and pray

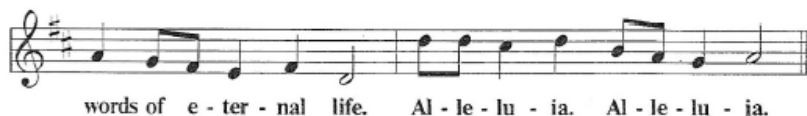
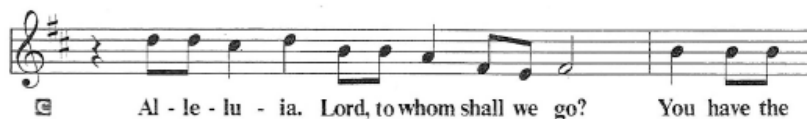
for one another, so that you may be healed. The prayer of the righteous is powerful and effective. ¹⁷Elijah was a human like us, and he prayed fervently that it might not rain, and

for three years and six months it did not rain on the earth. ¹⁸Then he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth yielded its harvest.

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 6: 1-21**

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

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. ²A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. ³Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. ⁴Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. ⁵When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?" ⁶He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. ⁷Philip answered him, "Six months' wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little." ⁸One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to him, ⁹"There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?" ¹⁰Jesus said, "Make the people sit down." Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. ¹¹Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. ¹²When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, "Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost." ¹³So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. ¹⁴When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, "This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world."

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

The congregation may be seated.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON



"Elijah: An Ordinary Man Like Us Called and Empowered by Our Extraordinary God of Power, Provision, and Presence!"

Pastor Doug

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

“Goodness of God”

Verse 1

I love You Lord

Oh Your mercy never fails me

All my days

I've been held in Your hands

From the moment that I wake up

Until I lay my head

I will sing of the goodness of God

Chorus

All my life You have been faithful

All my life You have been so so good

With every breath that I am able

I will sing of the goodness of God

Verse 2

I love Your voice

You have led me through the fire

In darkest night

You are close like no other

I've known You as a father

I've known You as a friend

I have lived in the goodness of God

Bridge

Your goodness is running after

It's running after me

Your goodness is running after

It's running after me

With my life laid down

I'm surrendered now

I give You everything

Your goodness is running after

It's running after me

Chorus



CCLI Song # 7117726 Ben Fielding | Brian Johnson | Ed Cash | Jason Ingram | Jenn Johnson

CCLI License # 22020296

***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

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: Generous God, You are the Provider who meets the needs of the faithful. As Elijah trusted Your word and courageously lived out his faith, so we bring to You these gifts with thankful hearts.

C: We offer them not as our own, but as a response to Your grace and a trust in Your ongoing care. May our gifts and our lives be used to sustain Your people, to bless the

hungry, the thirsty, and the weary, and to bear witness to Your faithfulness in the world, we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

***DIALOGUE AND PREFACE**

P: The Lord be with you. C: And also with you.

P: Lift up your hearts. C: We lift them to the Lord.

P: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. C: It is right to give him thanks and praise.

*** 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”

The musical score is written on four staves in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The melody is simple and hymn-like. The lyrics are: "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 first staff ends with a double bar line. The second staff ends with a double bar line. The third staff ends with a double bar line. The fourth staff ends with a double bar line.

*** COMMUNION BLESSING AND PRAYER**

P: Loving and compassionate God, Your presence and provision blessed Elijah in the wilderness and the widow and her son in a time of famine. At this table of grace, You have fed with us the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ our Lord and in Christ we declare: *“The Lord is my sustainer; I will not be afraid.”* Fed and nourished in Christ, may we, like Elijah, trust Your

word, walk in Your ways, and be a source of hope and life to others in the name of Jesus Christ the True Bread from heaven. **C: 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. Amen.

***SENDING HYMN “God Be with You Till We Meet Again”**

1 God be with you till we meet again; by good counsels guide, uphold you,
with a shepherd's care enfold you; God be with you till we meet again.

Refrain

***Till we meet, (till we meet,) till we meet, (till we meet again,)
till we meet at Jesus' feet; (till we meet,)
till we meet, (till we meet,) till we meet, (till we meet again.)
God be with you till we meet again.***

2 God be with you till we meet again; holy wings securely hide you,
daily manna still provide you; God be with you till we meet again. ***Refrain***

3 God be with you till we meet again; when life's perils thick confound you,
put unfailing arms around you; God be with you till we meet again. ***Refrain***

***DISMISSAL**

P: Fed and nourished by the Bread of Life, Jesus Christ our Lord, let us go in peace and joy to be God's courageous and faithful disciples who declare the goodness of God in word and deed! **C: Thanks be to God!**

ALTAR FLOWERS are given to the Glory of God by Lula Ingle.



In the Grace Church Family:

Jeffry Bivens, Rick & Cindy Bivens, Pat Dietz, Allen and Kay Hatchett, Lorene Heavner, Larry & Brenda Jarrett, Martha Johnson, Faye Lane, Phil & Malinda Leatherman, Betty Matheson, Joe Momier, Jane Moss, Christine Norman, Michael Norman, Tricia and Dan Panek, Mike, Debi & Stephen Pisko, Alice Parris, Todd Setzer, Ethan Starnes, Sandi Tallant, Libby Travis, Shirley Warlick, Ken Welch, Scott & Carolyn Whisnant, Jack Wilfong, and Nancy Willis.

Nursing Home: Juanita Haas (Trinity Village), Ted Whisnant (Trinity Village), Helen Smith is at Frye Hospital and will be returning Trinity Ridge.

Friends and Relatives in our Prayers: Pray for Peace in Israel and the World, New Covenant Lutheran Mission Church, Ashlee Bumgardner, Danelle Bumgardner, Travis

Bumgardner, Clinton Childers, Evelyn Childers, Marilyn Childers, Tucker Duncan, Alan Fulbright, Charlene Kistler, family of James McDaniel, Randy & Rita Neill, Anita Sabino, 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.

COMING UP AT GRACE THIS WEEK

Today: Eighteenth Sunday After Pentecost

9:30am – Sunday School

10:30am - Worship Celebration

Wednesday: 6:30pm – Evening Vespers Service

HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:

Larry Jarrett 9-1	Ted Whisnant 9-4	Brenda Jarrett 9-4
Mike Pisko 9-4	Gene Crouse 9-4	Jeff Scronce 9-12
Debi Pisko 9-13	Kathy Leatherman 9-15	Chris Jarrett 9-22
David Wilfong 9-24		

UPCOMING EVENTS

+Sun., Oct. 4: Food for the Poor Sunday 10:30am; Catawba Co. Walk for Hunger 3:00pm

+Sun., Oct. 11: The Four Walls Bluegrass Band Concert 5:00 pm, BBQ dinner to follow.

+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

GIVING AND ATTENDANCE FOR LAST SUNDAY

Date	Offering		Attendance	
	Total Receipts	General Fund	Worship	Sunday School
9/20/2026	\$2,724	\$2,495	53	13

KNOW YOUR CHURCH SURVEY

As a part of discovering God's vision for His Church here at Grace, you are invited to participate in a "Know Your Church" survey that will help us to see our areas of strength and also our growing edges. Please click the link below, answer questions to the best of your ability, and then submit. Your responses will be tabulated with everyone else who

responds. Up to 60 people can respond to the survey. If you want to do the survey but do not have a computer, smart phone, or internet, please see Pastor Doug or Todd and we can get you set up on one of the computers here at the church.

Know Your Church Survey Link <https://churchhealthreport.com/survey/?s=YQ3U7AB>

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! David and Belinda Wilfong are our church team captains. Any remaining donations should be turned in to David or Belinda by Sunday, September 27. David and Belinda will pick up our T-shirts that week and any final donations collected will be turned into Ashure at that time.

GRACE HOSTS BLUEGRASS BAND

Grace will be hosting "The Four Walls Bluegrass Gospel Band" on Sunday, Oct 11 at 5pm. If weather permitting, the concert will be in the outdoor shelter. We will have a BBQ Dinner afterwards. Please bring a side dish to share or a dessert. BBQ, Buns, Sauce, Slaw, Cups, Plates, Drinks and Ice will be provided. Please invite your friends and family!



Reflection on the Life of Elijah (please read 1 Kings 17 – 2 Kings 2)

Elijah's life is a vivid portrait of faith, courage, and dependence on God — a story that still calls us to obey, trust, and stand firm for truth.

A Prophet in a Dark Hour

*Elijah, a Tishbite from Gilead, appeared during a time when Israel had turned deeply toward Baal worship under King Ahab and Queen Jezebel. His name means “**My God is Yahweh**”, a declaration that became the heart of his ministry! God called him to confront idolatry, pronounce drought (judgment), and restore the people to the living God.*

Key Moments of Faith and Obedience

- ***Announcing the drought*** — Elijah spoke God's word without fear, trusting that the Lord alone controls the seasons. The rain symbolized God's blessing and favor.
- ***Feeding by the ravens*** — He obeyed God's instruction to hide by the Brook Cherith, learning that God can provide in unexpected ways.
- ***The widow of Zarephath*** — He shared his own bread and water with a stranger, showing that faith often means giving when resources are scarce.
- ***Mount Carmel*** — In a public contest, Elijah called down fire from heaven, exposing the futility of false gods and the power of the true God. Elijah called the people to put their faith in the covenantal promises of God and not their circumstances.

Moments of Weakness and Restoration

Even after victory, Elijah collapsed in fear and fled to Horeb, where God met him in a “still small voice” (1 Kings 19:11–13). This shows that God’s strength is perfected in human weakness, and that restorative encounters are essential for continued service. When God restored Elijah and his calling, God sent him a partner in ministry to mentor (Elisha). Elisha

Lessons for Today

1. ***Obey in hidden seasons*** — *Elijah’s obedience began in quiet, unseen ways before public confrontation.*
2. ***Trust God’s provision*** — *He relied on God for daily needs, even in hardship.*
3. ***Stand for truth*** — *Courage before corrupt power is a hallmark of faithful service.*
4. ***Seek God’s presence*** — *Elijah’s renewal came not from dramatic events, but from God’s gentle, personal presence.*
5. ***Blessed and a Blessing*** - *God used Elijah to bless others: Brought hope to the widow and her son in seeing that God will provide for their needs (food and restoration to life of her son). Elijah blessed the people of Israel through his courage and faith in God. He also prepared a prophet (Elisha) for future generations.*

A Devotional Thought

Elijah’s life reminds us that devotion to God is not about perfection, but about persistent trust, obedience, and willingness to be used by God in both public and private seasons. As we face our own “Mount Carmels” and “Brook Cheriths,” and “Caves of discouragement,” can we say, “My God is Yahweh and I will trust in God’s power, provision, and plan for my life as I faithfully stand firm with courage

Prayer: *Lord, give me the courage to speak Your word, the trust to rely on Your provision, and the humility to seek Your presence in the quiet moments. Help me to walk in faith, as Elijah did, until I see You in all I do and say. In the name, power, and love of Jesus. Amen*

Ministers of Grace – All the People of Grace

Pastor – Reverend Doug Hefner Board President – Tim Eckard

Lector – Stormy Shull Youth Leader – Stormy Shull

Altar Preparation – Cindy Bivens

Communion Assistants – Cindy Bivens & Tina Hefner

Ushers – Jeff Scronce & David Wilfong

Offering Counters – Todd Childers & Jeff Scronce