

The Grace Family Weekly Message
30 December 2021



WORSHIP AT GRACE THIS SUNDAY, THE 2ND OF JANUARY 2022.

The Gospel reading for Sunday is John 1:1-18.

See pages 2 & 3 for more information about this Sunday's worship service.

Installation of the 2022 Council will take place during worship on the 9th of January. The first 2022 Congregational Meeting will take place after worship on the 30th of January.

**A BIBLE STUDY ON WAITING FOR CONSOLATION
WITH SIMEON AND ANNA**

Bible Study topics for the last three weeks of 2021 have presented three examples of praise and prophecy found in Luke's Christmas story. They are Zechariah's Song (16 December), Mary's Song (22 December), and Simeon's Song (this week, Nunc Dimittis).

Luke 1:28-38 Simeon's Song--the Nunc Dimitis (NIV)

²⁸Simeon took (Jesus) in his arms and praised God, saying:

²⁹"Lord, as you have promised,

you may now dismiss your servant in peace.

³⁰For my eyes have seen your salvation,

³¹which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:

**³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel."**

³⁶There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel...She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷and then was a widow until she was eighty-four.³⁷ She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. ³⁸Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

We have endured 22 months of covid restrictions, and omicron is now threatening to make these restrictions last even longer. Many people are echoing the cry of the Psalmist, "**How long, O Lord?**" (Ps. 13:1). Most people have given up a lot during this time by sacrificing personal liberties to protect their families and neighbors. People have suffered through nearly two lost years and are yearning for relief, deliverance, and consolation. This is why the words of Simeon and Anna in Luke's birth narrative are so relevant for us today. Both were old, faithful to God's commandments and "**waiting for consolation**" (Luke 2:25), just as we wait for consolation.

Our occasion for meeting Simeon and Anna occurred 40 days after Jesus' birth when, according to Jewish law, parents must bring their new children to the temple for a ritual purification of the mother and to give a sacrifice for the redemption of a firstborn



This painting in the Wittenberg, Germany City Church depicts the presence of Simeon and Anna when the baby Jesus was presented in the temple 40 days after his birth.

son. When Joseph and Mary brought the baby Jesus into the temple, both Simeon and Anna were there. Simeon was an elderly, devout man who spent a lot of time in the temple. The Holy Spirit had told him **“He would not die before he had seen the Lord’s Messiah”** (v2:26). He had waited a long time for the consolation of knowing that God would fulfill his promise to deliver a Messiah.

Mary and Joseph let Simeon hold their baby. Simeon knew the Messianic promise God’s prophets had given to the people so we can

imagine the joy he felt as he proclaimed: **“You may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation.”** Simeon held God’s Messianic promise in his hands! The baby Jesus was Simeon’s consolation.

Simeon’s prayer of thanks and exultation is called the *“Nunc Dimitus.”* Setting Two in our ***Lutheran Book of Worship*** (p135) has the congregation sing the *“Nunc Dimitis”* after worshippers receive communion and return to their places. We sing these words: ***“Now, Lord, you let your servant go in peace: your word has been fulfilled. My own eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared in the sight of every people: a light to reveal you to the nations and the glory of your people Israel.”*** Our church (ELCA) teaches that in the sacrament, ***“the crucified and risen Christ is present.”*** The forgiveness of sins that Christ’s sacrifice and resurrection gives us becomes our consolation. We thank and praise God for our gift of consolation by singing Simeon’s words of consolation.

Anna was also old. She had turned a young widow’s grief into daily prayer and fasting in the temple. She spent decades waiting for consolation. She too understood what this baby meant. She approached Mary, Joseph, and the baby, spoke prophetically by ***“giving thanks to God”*** and assured everyone present that they were in the presence of ***“redemption.”***

Anna and Simeon waited years for the consolation the coming of the Messiah gave them. The opportunity the Grace Family had again this year to celebrate the birth of the Messiah and all that it means to us must surely be consolation for us as well.

WEEKLY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AT GRACE

© ***WORSHIP ON SUNDAY.*** This coming Sunday, the 2nd of January, will be the 2nd Sunday of Christmas. The Gospel reading is John 1:1-18. Pastor Jaci and Church Musician Bobbie Bean will conduct the worship service, which will take place in the sanctuary, starting at 10:30 AM.

- **Sanctuary Seating.** We have returned the full sanctuary to socially distanced seating (*every other pew; please do not sit in pews marked with red ribbons*).
- **Covid Safety Precautions.** Safety and health precautions that Grace has been using since September will continue: Stationary offering plates, stationary passing of the peace, communion in place, optional but recommended masking.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING ALL MEMBERS OF THE GRACE FAMILY AND VISITORS TO WORSHIP ON SUNDAY!

- ⊙ **ATTENDANCE AND OFFERING LAST SUNDAY.** 65 persons attended worship on Christmas Eve; 32 persons attended worship last Sunday for the Lessons and Carols Service. The final week's offering total was \$1,658. The 2021 offering total came out almost exactly on budget. We budgeted to receive \$150,000 in offerings in 2021; the total for the year was \$150,231. Thank you to all who attend worship and continue to contribute regular offerings.
- ⊙ **CONGRATULATIONS.** Congratulations to Randy and Linda Jacobs on the birth of their granddaughter **Anna Rose Snyder** on December 20th, 2021. Anna Rose is the daughter of Cory and Kristen Snyder and a new sister to Jack and Kate.
- ⊙ **PRAYER CONCERNS.** Please keep the following persons in your prayers:
The Family of Chelly Mellott, The Family of Eugene Avers, The Hansen Family
Pastor Stephen Lutz, Tom Szor, Shelly Sherman, Barbara Harger, Beverly Koveing, Kathy Spangler, Patricia Morral, Karen Southwyck, Carol Morgan, Dustin Schmidt, Chris Marquardt, Donald Bench, Jeannette Young, Sean, Bethany Collier, Dan Van Etten, Scott Taylor, Jody Angelone, Ron Dangler, Jen and Steve, Marge Griffin, Jim Flick, Josh Hunker, Stephen Andrew, Dean Crandall, Kelly Troyer, Nadine Crisologos, Cheryl Hoot, Dick and Ruth Hammel, Reed Oestreich, Heather DeWitz, members of the Grace family who reside in nursing homes including Donna Foss (Parkcliff), Sandy Cutchall (Genoa), Joan Dietrich (Genoa), and Bertha Marquardt (Orchard Villa), and members of the Grace family and their colleagues who serve in the Armed Forces. If you know of someone to add to the prayer list, please inform Pastor Jaci or the Church Office.
- ⊙ **CONGREGATION AND COUNCIL MEETING DATES.** The installation of the 2022 Council will take place during worship on the 9th of January. The first meeting of the 2022 Grace Council will be at the church on Thursday, the 13th of January. The Annual Congregation Meeting, which the Constitution requires to take place at the end of January, will take place after worship on the 30th of January in the Fellowship Hall. A pot-luck brunch is planned (*barring unforeseen covid developments*) that will precede the official meeting. The primary purpose of the congregational meeting is to present the **2021 Annual Report**.
- ⊙ **CHRISTMAS DECORATION TAKE-DOWN.** Anyone who would like to assist with taking down the Christmas decorations in the sanctuary is invited to come to the church on Saturday morning, the 8th of January at 11:00 AM.

- © **CHURCH DIRECTORY.** The Board of Congregational Life has initiated a project to produce an updated **Church Directory**. A first step in this process is to make sure the church has current information regarding names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers for all members of the Grace family. A copy of the current directory is in the Narthex. Please check the listing for your family and note any changes that should be included in the new directory.
- © **GRACE WATER SYSTEM UPDATE.** The Board of Property has continued its work, in coordination with the Ohio EPA, to implement solutions to ensure that water samples taken from Grace’s water system no longer test positive for total chloroform. A plan to replace the old water pressure system with a new system has now been approved by the Ohio EPA and installation should take place in the coming days. Progress is being made and the Board hopes to soon reach a successful resolution that once again makes Grace’s water supply safe to drink.
- © **FLOWERS FOR WORSHIP.** The 2022 Flower Chart is on the Narthex table. Please consider signing up to provide flower arrangements that may be dedicated to loved ones or to recognize special occasions.

UPCOMING ACTIVITES AND EVENTS			
Date	Event	Time	Location
2 January, Sunday	Regular Worship, with Communion	10:30 AM	Sanctuary
4 January, Tuesday	Piecemakers	9:30 AM	Grace
6 January, Thursday	Board of Property	5:30 PM	Grace
8 January, Saturday	Christmas Decoration Take-Down	11:00 AM	Grace
9 January, Sunday	Council Installation (during worship)	10:30 AM	Sanctuary
11 January, Tuesday	Board of Witness and Mission	4:00 PM	Grace
13 January, Thursday	Grace Council Meeting	7:00 PM	Grace
30 January, Sunday	Annual Congregational Meeting <i>Presentation of Annual Reports</i>	After Worship	Grace Fellowship Hall
Regular Weekly Events:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesday mornings, at 9:30 AM, Piecemakers assemble to do God’s work • Tuesday evenings, at 7:00 PM, Choir practice • Sunday mornings, at 10:30 AM, Worship, with communion 			

- © **DEACON AND LECTOR SCHEDULE.** Deacons and Lectors scheduled to serve in upcoming worship services are listed in the table.

DEACONS AND LECTORS FOR UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES		
DATE	DEACONS	LECTORS
2 January	Steve Simkus & Steve Blausey	Ruth Ann Anderson
9 January	Gene Michel & Alan Wolfe	Jean Weng
16 January	Bruce King & Pr. Dave Wietelmann	Michelle Timbrook
23 January	Mary & Mike Schlievert	John Marik

- © **PIECEMAKERS.** On Tuesday, the 4th of January, starting at 9:30 AM, the Piecemakers quilting project will resume their work at the church. Anyone interested in being part of this vital ministry is invited to join them on Tuesday mornings.
- © **BENEVOLENCE ELECTION FOR MEMBERS.** Ten percent of all offerings contributed to Grace Lutheran are dedicated to benevolences. Since 2012, Grace has offered two options for members to choose from for how the benevolence portion of their offerings are distributed. Both the Traditional and Directed Benevolence options include portions that are shared with World Hunger and with a list of First Fruits recipients selected by the Board of Witness and Mission. The Traditional Option gives the remaining portion to the Northwest Ohio Synod and ELCA. The Directed Option shares the remaining portions with new agencies or provides additional support for current First Fruits agencies, as needs arise. Each year, individuals are asked to select the benevolence option or manner of benevolence distribution they prefer. If no selection is made, the funds are distributed as a Traditional Option. Any member who would like to review or change how their benevolence contributions are distributed should contact Financial Secretary Deb Boos.
- © **OPERATION OREO.** Please keep all military personnel in your prayers, but especially: SSG Stephen Simkus and Cadet Julian Sanchez.

 - Anyone wishing to donate to Operation Oreo to help offset the cost of shipping and the contents of the Goody boxes -- Just mark "Op Oreo" on the memo line of your check.
 - If you have a name to add to our list or if you have any questions about Operation Oreo, please contact Jennifer Marquardt.
- © **ELMORE FOOD PANTRY.** The Grace Food Pantry item for January is 7.25 oz. packages of Macaroni & Cheese. The Elmore Food Pantry, which is hosted at Grace, will be open on the second Friday of each month, starting with the 14th of January, from 9:00 AM until noon. Anyone who wishes to drop off food items at the church may bring them to the church on Sunday or leave them inside the north door during times when the church office door is open.
- © **SPECIAL BENEVOLENCE ACTIVITIES:**

 - **Advent Offering.** This year's advent offerings were dedicated to purchasing alpacas through the Heifer International program. A total of \$728 in Advent Offering contributions were made. Each alpaca costs \$150 and will produce wool and milk for a needy family.
 - **Millers Receipts.** Members of the Grace Family who shop at Miller New Market Grocery in Genoa should continue to keep their receipts and give them to Marilyn Crandall who will redeem them for Grace (*or send them to 9591 W Moonlight Bay Lane, Oak Harbor OH 43449*).
 - **Prayer Shawls and Pocket Quilts.** If anyone would like a prayer shawl or pocket quilts to give to someone, contact **Nancy Pries (npries@yahoo.com, 862-3300 or 707-9799)**.

Our prayer: Gracious God, you have given us our consolation through your Son; we praise and thank you this incomparable gift.

GRACE CONTACT INFORMATION		
PASTOR	COUNCIL PRESIDENT	CHURCH OFFICE
Pastor Jaci Tiell pastorjacitiell@aol.com 419-215-8370	Gary Anderson dcmgaryanderson@gmail.com 419-607-3036	Joyce Bruntz graceelc@gmail.com 419-862-3630

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