

## **The Grace Family Weekly Message**

13 January 2022



**WORSHIP AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH THIS SUNDAY, THE 16<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY. The Gospel reading for Sunday is John 2:1-11.**

*See pages 2-3 for more information about Sunday's worship service.*

**GRACE'S FIRST 2022 CONGREGATIONAL MEETING WILL TAKE PLACE AFTER WORSHIP ON SUNDAY THE 30<sup>TH</sup> OF JANUARY.**

### **A BIBLE STUDY ON THE PROPHET HABAkkUK**

*This week's Bible Study is the tenth in a current series on Old Testament prophets. It looks at how the prophet Habakkuk openly challenged God for tolerating evil.*

#### **Habakkuk 1:2-3 (Habakkuk's complaint against God)**

***<sup>2</sup>How long, O LORD, must I call for help,  
yet you do not listen?***

***Or cry out to you, "Violence!"***

***yet you do not save?***

***<sup>3</sup>Why do you make me look at injustice?***

***Why do you tolerate evil?***

#### **Habakkuk 2:3-4 (God's answer)**

***<sup>3</sup>For the plan awaits an appointed time;***

***it speaks of the end***

***and will not prove false.***

***Even if it seems slow, wait for it;***

***it will surely come***

***and will not be deterred.***

***<sup>4</sup>Behold, the unrighteous boast of their evil acts,  
but the righteous person will live by his faith.***

Habakkuk is one of the 12 minor prophets. His writing is notable for two reasons. First, the author's literary and poetic skills were praised by many scholars; the book of Habakkuk ranks as great literature. The second reason may shock many of us-- Habakkuk challenged and attacked God for tolerating evil. Habakkuk is a helpful book for us to study because it also challenges us to wrestle with the problem of evil. Why does God allow evil to exist? When and how will God act against evil?

There are not a lot of clues regarding who Habakkuk was or when he was active. In one of God's responses to Habakkuk's accusations, he said, "***I am raising up the Babylonians***" (v1:6). This suggests Habakkuk was active during the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE (*Babylonia conquered Assyria in 612 BCE*). Neither the Bible nor the book itself offers any biographical information. The book's text, however, is well authenticated. There was a Habakkuk commentary in the Dead Sea Scrolls. The book consistently appears in early, extant minor prophet scrolls.

Habakkuk begins with a challenge to God that most of us, even in our most exasperated, distressed states, would not dare to think, let alone say. He began his prophecy by shouting “**How long, O Lord, must I call for help, yet you do not listen.**” “**I cry out “Violence,” yet you do not save.**” We can relate to what he was feeling because we witnessed the violence of the 6 January 2021 insurrection in this country, and we have persevered through nearly two years of covid restrictions and mortal fears. But would we dare to attack God so boldly for not stopping violence in our land or rescuing us from the covid pandemic?

The poetic structure of Habakkuk’s first two chapters alternates between his attacks against God (v1:2-4; v1:12-2:1) and God’s responses (v1:5-11; v2:2-20). God’s second answer to Habakkuk silenced his attacks: “**For the plan awaits an appointed time; it speaks of the end and will not prove false. Even if it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come and will not be deterred.**” God acts in his time, not according to our time.

The text continues with a series of prophecies against evil: “**Woe to him who builds his house by unjust gain**” (v2:9); “**Woe to him who builds a city with bloodshed and establishes a town by injustice!**” (v2:12), etc. He ends each attack against injustice with a promise that justice will ultimately prevail: “**the nations exhaust themselves for nothing; for the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord**” (v2:14). Indeed, God’s fulfillment of the promised Messiah, which we just celebrated anew, meant the Kingdom of God where evil is vanquished “**has come near**” (Matt. 4:17).

One often quoted verse teaches us how we should respond to God promise to act: “**Behold, the unrighteous boast of their evil acts, but the righteous person will live by his faith**” (v2:4). God may be waiting for “**an appointed time,**” but we must have “**faith**” that God’s acts “**will surely come.**” When God promised Abraham he would not only have an heir but that his progeny would be like the stars in the sky, “**Abraham believed the Lord, and (God) credited it to him as righteous**” (Gen. 15:6). We too must learn to trust in God’s promises while waiting for Him to act.

The third and last chapter of this short book is Habakkuk’s prayer that begins with his realization that God is in charge: “**Lord, I stand in awe of your deeds**” (v3:2). His prayer confesses his faith that God will triumph over evil. “**You went forth to deliver your people, to save your anointed one. You crushed the leader of the land of wickedness**” (v3:13). Now we have seen how Habakkuk came to understand that God has a plan to address evil. His faith should strengthen our faith that God is acting to counter persistent evil in our day.

## WEEKLY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AT GRACE

© **WORSHIP ON SUNDAY.** This coming Sunday, the 16<sup>th</sup> of January, is the Second Sunday after Epiphany. The service will take place in the Sanctuary, starting at 10:30 AM. The Gospel reading is John 2:1-11. Pastor Jaci and Church Musician Bobbie Bean will conduct the worship service.

- **Worship Liturgy.** Starting with last Sunday, the 9<sup>th</sup> of January, the worship liturgy has switched to Setting 4 (*page 147 in the Hymnal*).

- **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.** 47 persons attended worship last Sunday. The offering total for the second week of the year was \$1,927. With a 2022 offering budget of \$145,000, offerings at Grace must average \$2,789 per week to reach this target. Thank you to all who attend worship and continue to contribute regular offerings.

© **PRAYER CONCERNS.** Please keep the following persons in your prayers:

The Family of Richard Reeder, The Family of Barb Moellman, The Family of Harry Limmer, The Family of George Gerkenmeyer.

Randy Jacobs, Karen Hoffer, 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 first meeting of the 2022 Grace Council will take place today, the 13<sup>th</sup> of January, via Zoom. This was originally scheduled to be an in-person meeting but with covid risks increasing we decided to meet via Zoom. The Annual Congregation Meeting, which the Constitution requires to take place at the end of January, will take place after worship on the 30<sup>th</sup> of January in the Fellowship Hall. The primary purpose of the congregational meeting is to present the **2021 Annual Report**. A potluck brunch is planned (*pending an evaluation of the covid risk*) that will precede the official meeting. A sign-up sheet for the potluck is in the Narthex.

© **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 contract to replace the old water pressure system with a new system was signed and installation is scheduled to take place this coming week, on January 19th. The Property Board hopes this installation will be successful in making Grace's water supply safe to drink--to the satisfaction of the Ohio EPA.

- © **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.
- © **PIECEMAKERS.** On Tuesday, the 18<sup>th</sup> 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.

| UPCOMING ACTIVITES AND EVENTS  |  |                  |                          |
|--|--|------------------|--------------------------|
| Date   | Event  | Time             | Location                 |
| 13 January, Thursday   | Grace Council Meeting  | 7:00 PM          | Grace                    |
| 18 January, Tuesday  | Piecemakers Quilters   | 9:30 AM          | Grace                    |
| 30 January, Sunday   | Annual Congregational Meeting<br><i>Presentation of Annual Reports</i> | After<br>Worship | Grace<br>Fellowship Hall |
| <b>Regular Weekly Events:</b>  |  |                  |                          |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesday mornings, at 9:30 AM, Piecemakers assemble to do God's work</li> <li>• Tuesday evenings, at 7:00 PM, Choir practice</li> <li>• Sunday mornings, at 10:30 AM, Worship, with communion</li> </ul> |  |                  |                          |

- © **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           |
| 16 January  | Bruce King & Pr. Dave Wietelmann | Michelle Timbrook |
| 23 January  | Mary & Mike Schlievert           | John Marik        |
| 30 January  | Randy Jacobs & Gary Anderson     | Steve Blausey     |
| 6 February  | Jennifer & Mark Haar             | Mark Haar         |

- © **OPERATION OREO.** The Op Oreo boxes are always filled with seasonal items – so this time of year we put Girl Scout Cookies in the boxes. We will need 6 total boxes of cookies. Girl Scout Cookies this year are \$5 a box. If you would like to give a box of Girl Scout Cookies – just mark “Op Oreo” on the memo line of your check payable to Grace Lutheran Church. Jennifer Marquardt will then purchase the cookies and include them in the next shipment.

- Please keep all military personnel in your prayers, but especially: SSG Stephen Simkus, U. S. Army, and Cadet Julian Sanchez, U. S. Military Academy.
- 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

- © **WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA 2022.** The Ottawa County Wreaths across America committee will conduct ceremonies at Clay Township, Harris Elmore Union, and Allen Township cemeteries on Dec. 17th. Donations will ensure that all veteran's graves will receive a wreath.

  - Checks payable to Wreaths across America can be given to John Heminger, placed in the marked collection box on the table in the narthex or mailed to Wreaths Across America, 8444 W. SR 163, Oak Harbor, Oh 43449.
  - If you wish to designate the location, write Clay Township, Allen Township, or Harris Township on the memo line.
  - Veteran help will be required the day of the ceremony to lay the ceremonial wreaths. Tell John if you are willing to help and which branch of the service you would like to honor.
  - The WAA committee is also collecting receipts from the Community Market in Oak Harbor. Put them in the collection box, NOT in the jar for Miller's receipts.
- © **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, is open on the second Friday of each month, starting with the 14<sup>th</sup> 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.
- © **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:**

  - Elmore American Legion Riders will host a drive thru spaghetti dinner on Sunday, January 16, from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM.
  - The Genoa American Legion (302 West St.) will host pancake breakfasts on the last Sunday of each month, from 8:00-1:00.
- © **SPECIAL BENEVOLENCE ACTIVITIES:**

  - **Advent Offering.** This year's advent offerings were dedicated to purchasing alpacas through the Heifer International program. A final total of \$889 in Advent Offering contributions were made. Thrivent provided an additional \$311 to bring the final total to \$1,200. Each alpaca costs \$150 and will produce wool and milk for a needy family so Grace's 2021 Advent offering program will purchase 8 alpacas. Thank you to Thrivent and all who contributed to this special benevolence cause.
  - **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)**.

- **Amazon Smile Fundraiser.** Amazon purchases earn cash contributions for Grace Lutheran Church if you enroll in the Amazon Smile program and name Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church, Elmore OH, as your designated charity. Log in with this address: [smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1219970](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1219970). If you use the Amazon Smile program and designate Grace as your charity, 0.5% of your eligible purchases will be donated to Grace. Donations received through this program are divided evenly between Operation Oreo and the Piecemakers.

***Our prayer: Faithful God, help us to have faith that as your Kingdom comes near, evil will not prevail.***

| GRACE CONTACT INFORMATION   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| PASTOR  | COUNCIL PRESIDENT   | CHURCH OFFICE  |
| Pastor Jaci Tiell<br><a href="mailto:pastorjacitiell@aol.com">pastorjacitiell@aol.com</a><br>419-215-8370 | Gary Anderson<br><a href="mailto:dcmgaryanderson@gmail.com">dcmgaryanderson@gmail.com</a><br>419-607-3036 | Joyce Bruntz<br><a href="mailto:graceelc@gmail.com">graceelc@gmail.com</a><br>419-862-3630 |

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