

# Grace Family Weekly Message

12 May 2022



**WORSHIP AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH THIS SUNDAY, THE 15<sup>th</sup> OF MAY. The Gospel reading is John 13:31-35**

## A BIBLE STUDY ON STEADFAST CHRISTIAN FAITH

During our recent travels in Southern France one of the most remarkable stories we encountered was about an 18<sup>th</sup> century French Huguenot girl who was imprisoned for her faith at age 15 and not released until 38 years later. This week's Bible Study considers what it means to be steadfast in one's Christian faith. *Gary Anderson*

Daniel 3:13-18 (NRSV)

***<sup>13</sup>Then Nebuchadnezzar in furious rage commanded that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego be brought in; so they brought those men before the king.***

***<sup>14</sup>Nebuchadnezzar said to them, "Is it true, O Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, that you do not serve my gods and you do not worship the golden statue that I have set up? <sup>15</sup>Now if you are ready when you hear the sound of the horn, pipe, lyre, trigon, harp, drum, and entire musical ensemble to fall down and worship the statue that I have made, well and good. But if you do not worship, you shall immediately be thrown into a furnace of blazing fire, and who is the god that will deliver you out of my hands?"***

***<sup>16</sup>Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered the king, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to present a defense to you in this matter. <sup>17</sup>If our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the furnace of blazing fire and out of your hand, O king, let him deliver us. <sup>18</sup>But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up."***

The Old Testament story about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego is about being imprisoned for steadfastly holding to one's faith in the face of intense government coercion to worship the gods of a state or government religion. Nebuchadnezzar II was a King who ruled Babylonia from 605 to 562 BCE. In the Book of Daniel, he is portrayed as a merciless and despotic ruler who sought to force Daniel's three companions Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, to worship his "**golden statue.**" When they refused, "**O king...we will not serve your gods and we will not worship the golden statue that you have set up,**" they were imprisoned for not following the King's government enforced religion.



2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> century Christians were imprisoned for refusing to worship Roman gods in temples like this one in Nimes, France.

John, the author of the Book of Revelation, introduced himself as a prisoner who was incarcerated on the Island of Patmos “**because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus**” (Revelation 1:9). In the first three centuries of the Christian Church, many Christians were imprisoned or martyred because they refused to renounce their Christian faith and worship gods enshrined in Roman temples.

In April 1521, the Holy Roman Emperor summoned Martin Luther to a trial in Worms, Germany, which sought to force him to recant his Reformation teachings. Luther refused to renounce teachings that he believed were based on scripture and conscience: “*I cannot and will not recant anything, since it is neither safe nor right to go against conscience.*” Luther escaped imprisonment at Worms only because the Emperor had given him a “safe conduct” authorization to get him to come to the trial. The Protestant Reformation continued to grow because of his steadfast faith.

Marie Durand’s imprisonment was an outgrowth of the Protestant Reformation



*The gatehouse tower in the still-intact medieval city wall of Aigues-Mortes, France. During the 18<sup>th</sup> century, its upper room was used as a prison for Protestants like Marie Durand.*

that Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, and others launched. Marie was a Huguenot. Huguenots were French Protestants who followed Calvinist teachings. France was a Catholic country and when Huguenot congregations became more numerous in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, they were brutally persecuted. In the St. Bartholomew’s Day massacre in 1572, Catholics killed as many as 30,000 Huguenots. A period of religious wars followed that were temporarily halted by the Edict of Nantes and its toleration of Protestantism. The Edict, however, was rescinded by a subsequent French King and forced conversions or imprisonments of Protestants resumed.

In 1730, Marie Durand was imprisoned in the gatehouse tower of Aigues-Mortes, in Southern France, because she was a Huguenot. Her older brother was a Huguenot Pastor who was eventually captured and executed. It is said that all Marie Durand had to do to get out of prison was to renounce her Protestant beliefs and convert to Catholicism. She remained steadfast in her beliefs and as a result was held in prison for 38 years.

These stories about the steadfast devotion to their faith by Daniel’s companions, John of Patmos, early Christians, Martin Luther, and French Protestants like Marie Durand can be both inspiring to know that God’s people can be steadfast in their faith and sobering to know that living as a Christian is never easy. We obviously do not face the threats of imprisonment that these Saints faced, but temptations to succumb to personal greed or lust for power, government attempts to impose religious-based solutions and the alluring appeals of popular culture all are still trying to keep us from being steadfast in our Christian faith and actions.

\*\*\*\*\*

## WEEKLY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AT GRACE

**WORSHIP ON SUNDAY.** This coming Sunday, the 15<sup>th</sup> of May, is the Fifth Sunday of Easter. Worship starts at 10:30 AM. The Gospel reading is John 13:31-35. Pastor Jaci and Church Musician Bobbie will lead the worship service.

### **WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING ALL MEMBERS OF THE GRACE FAMILY AND VISITORS TO WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY**

- © **WORSHIP SEATING AND COMMUNION AT GRACE.** Seating in the Grace Sanctuary is now open. Worshippers may take any open seat.
  - **Other covid precautions continue,** including optional mask wearing, stationary offering, stationary passing of the peace and the opportunity to worship in vehicles, with the services broadcast over FM 94.1.
  - **Worshippers go forward for Communion.** We now receive communion by going forward. We continue to use the pre-packaged communion elements or worshippers may bring their own elements. A Deacon will direct worshippers when to go forward. Take your communion elements with you when you go forward. Pastor will administer the body/bread. A second Deacon will administer the blood/wine. Pastor will go out to commune worshippers in their vehicles.
- © **UPCOMING WORSHIP PLANS.** The choir will sing at worship on 22 May and then break for the summer. Pentecost will be celebrated on Sunday, the 5<sup>th</sup> of June. The Pentecost service will be in the Sanctuary—plan to wear red that day. Tentative plans are to start worshipping in the Fellowship Hall on the 12<sup>th</sup> of June. Rally Day (God’s Work—Our Hands) and the assembly of personal care kits is 11 September. Choir singing will begin on the 18<sup>th</sup> of September.
- © **PRAYER CONCERNS.** Please keep the following persons in your prayers:  
The Family of Charles Henton  
Ken Pettit, Pastor John Bock, Carol Jacob, Pastor Karl Kessler, Angela Scardina, Bethany Collier, Leslee Bundy, Tom Szor, Shelly Sherman, Barbara Harger, Kathy Spangler, Patricia Morral, Karen Southwyck, Jay Southwyck, Jessica Southwyck, Carol Morgan, Dustin Schmidt, Chris Marquardt, Donald Bench, Sean, Jody Angelone, Ron Dangler, Jen and Steve, Marge Griffin, Jim Flick, Josh Hunker, Stephen Andrew, Dean Crandall, Kelly Troyer, Nadine Crisologos, Cheryl Hoot, 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.
- © **Baptisms of Elsie Jean and Tyler Rickman.** Last Sunday, Pastor Jaci baptized Elsie Jean Rickman, daughter of Rebecca and Tyler Rickman, granddaughter of Jeff and Deb Boos and great-granddaughter of Merlyn and Jean Weng. Elsie Jean’s father Tyler Rickman was also baptized during the same service.

Elsie Jean's Sponsors are Marissa Boos and Blake Rickman. The Grace Family "welcomes Tyler and Elsie Jean Rickman into the body of Christ!"

- © **ATTENDANCE AND OFFERING LAST WEEK.** 75 persons attended worship last Sunday. Offering contributions on Sunday were \$1,751. Offerings need to average \$2,789 per week to meet the 2022 Offering budget target. So far in 2022, offerings are ahead of that budget goal. Thank you to all who attend worship and continue to contribute regular offerings.
- © **GERANIUMS FOR PENTECOST.** Pentecost this year is on Sunday, the 5th of June. **Red Geraniums** will be available for PENTECOST, on that Sunday. The plants will be in a 6 1/2" pot and wrapped in red foil. The cost will be \$10.00 each. An order form for Pentecost Geraniums is on page 6. Please get your money and order form to the church office and indicate it is for a Geranium. The order deadline is May 22<sup>nd</sup>.
- © **Grace Council Meetings.** The Council's most recent meeting was a Zoom meeting on 21 April. Discussion and decision items were reported in the 28 April and 5 May editions of the Grace Weekly Message. The next Council Meeting will be this evening, 12 May. Due to recent covid issues, this meeting will also be a Zoom meeting.

UPCOMING ACTIVITES AND EVENTS			
Date	Event	Time	Location
12 May, Thursday	Council Meeting	7:00 PM	Grace
5 June, Sunday	Pentecost Worship	10:30 AM	Sanctuary
18 July, Monday	Red Cross Blood Drive	12:00 – 5:00 PM	Fellowship Hall
9 August, Tuesday	Board of Worship	7:00 PM	Grace
<b>Regular Weekly Events:</b>			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tuesdays and Thursdays: 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Elmore Senior Citizens (<i>meets in the Fellowship Hall</i>)</li> <li>• Sunday mornings, at 10:30 AM, Worship, with communion (<i>in the Sanctuary</i>)</li> </ul>			

APRIL 2022 FINANCIAL REPORT – A BRIEF SUMMARY			
CATEGORY	April: Actual Income & Expenses	Year to Date Actuals <sup>2</sup>	2022 Budget for four months <sup>3</sup>
Offerings <sup>1</sup>	\$13,587	\$51,327	\$48,333
Unrestricted Income <sup>4</sup>	\$12,738	\$60,372	\$46,467
Operational Expenses	\$8,705	\$38,255	\$41,853
<b>Net: Income vs Expenses</b>	<b>\$4,034</b>	<b>\$13,072</b>	<b>\$4,614</b>
<b>Notes:</b> <sup>1</sup> 10% of "Offerings" are allocated to Benevolences; 6% are allocated to the Maintenance Fund. <sup>2</sup> To determine current budget status, compare "Year to Date Actuals" with the "2022 Budget." <sup>3</sup> The 2022 Budget is calendarized to show the amount allocated through the current month. <sup>4</sup> "Unrestricted Income" is 84% of offerings plus rental and miscellaneous income.			

- © **OPERATION OREO.** Please keep all of the military in your prayers, but especially: SSG Stephen Simkus, Cadet Julian Sanchez and CPL Theodore Ozanski.
  - 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.

© **PHOTOS FOR CHURCH DIRECTORY.** Photos for an updated Church Directory are being taken. If you have not yet signed up for your family photograph, the sign-up sheet is in the Church Narthex.

© **ELMORE FOOD PANTRY.** The Grace Food Pantry item for May is soap (bath-sized bars). The Elmore Food Pantry, which Grace hosts, is open on the second Friday of each month, 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.

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

DATE	DEACONS	LECTORS
15 May	Bruce King & Pr. Dave Wietelmann	Mary Lou Kohli
22 May	Jennifer & Mark Haar	Ruth Ann Anderson
29 May	Jean and Merlyn Weng	Rachel Beeler
5 June	Deb & Jeff Boos	Judy Zimmerman

© **SYNOD YOUTH DAY.** NWOS is sponsoring the NWOS YOUTH DAY on June 12th, 2022, from 2:00-6:00 PM, at Maumee Rotary Pavilion at Side Cut Metropark in Maumee. This is a FREE event for all youth 7th grade and up. More information is posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hallway.

© **NORTH CENTRAL WELCA SPRING ASSEMBLY.** All area Lutheran women are invited to the North Central WELCA Spring Assembly on Saturday, May 14th at St. John Lutheran Church in Oak Harbor. Program: "Bridges Out of Poverty Overview." The cost is \$10.00 for the continental breakfast, program, and lunch. Reservations can be made at [dmjess75@gmail.com](mailto:dmjess75@gmail.com) or call Nola at 419-704-5011.

© **GOD'S WORK PROJECTS.** Personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief will be assembled at the church on Sept 11th, **God's Work Our Hands Sunday.** 112 kits will be assembled. Members of the Grace Family are asked to donate the following items needed for these kits. There is a collection box on the table in the narthex where you can place the items you donate.

The collection schedule and items required is:

- **May - bars of soap** - 37 needed
- **39 fingernail clippers are still needed**
- **The collection box is on the table in the Narthex**

© **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:**

- Looking for full or part-time work? The Census Bureau is looking for Field Supervisors and Field Representatives for Northwest Ohio. A flyer is posted on the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hallway with more information.

© **SPECIAL BENEVOLENCE ACTIVITIES:**

- **Backpacks for Humans (<https://backpacknation.space/>).** This 501(c) (3) organization, which serves people in crisis in the Toledo area. Now that it is summer, its current needs are for ball caps, sun screen, and ChapStick. Anyone who has extras of these items is urged to bring them to the church and place them in the collection box in the Narthex.
- **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: Merciful God, keep us steadfast in our faith as we strive to follow the examples of Christian Saints who have gone before us.***

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

**Grace ELC Weekly Message Distribution.** *Grace Family Weekly Messages* are distributed by email and regular mail to Grace's members and friends to inform them about Grace's worship services, church activities and benevolence programs. Anyone who wishes to submit an announcement for the **Message** should contact the Church Office (email to [graceelc@gmail.com](mailto:graceelc@gmail.com); mail to the Church at: 19225 W. Witty Road, Elmore OH 43416). To add someone to the distribution list, send their email or mailing address to the Church Office.

.....  
**ORDER FORM FOR PENTECOST *RED GERANIUMS*:**

Geraniums will be available for PENTECOST, Sunday, June 5, 2022. The plants will be in a 6 1/2" pot and wrapped in red foil. The cost will be \$10.00.

The order deadline is May 22nd. Please get your money and order form to the church office and indicate it is for a Geranium.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I would like \_\_\_\_\_ geraniums at \$10.00 each    Total: \_\_\_\_\_

In memory of/in honor of: \_\_\_\_\_