

Grace Family Weekly Message

10 November 2022



**WORSHIP AT GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
THIS SUNDAY, THE 13TH OF NOVEMBER.**

Sunday's Gospel reading is Luke 21:5-19 (See page 3 for more information)

A BIBLE STUDY ABOUT HEZEKIAH--A GOOD KING

Previous Bible Studies about the leaders of God's people reported how the Bible concluded that the kings of Israel were all bad. This week's study considers a king of Judah who was judged to be a good king. How did he get to be a good king?

II Kings 18:3-8 (NIV)

³(Hezekiah) did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done. ⁴He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones, and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made, for up to that time the Israelites had been burning incense to it. (It was called Nehushtan.)

⁵Hezekiah trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel. There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah, either before him or after him. ⁶He held fast to the LORD and did not stop following him; he kept the commands the LORD had given Moses. ⁷And the LORD was with him; he was successful in whatever he undertook. He rebelled against the king of Assyria and did not serve him. ⁸From watchtower to fortified city, he defeated the Philistines, as far as Gaza and its territory.

Hezekiah ruled as a king in Judah, the Southern Kingdom, for 29 years, from 726 BCE to 697 BCE. The books of Kings and Chronicles were definitive in judging whether the kings of Israel and Judah were good or bad. They said every one of the Northern Kingdom of Israel's 19 kings were evil because they tolerated or promoted the worship of Ba'als and other false gods. The Southern Kingdom of Judah had 21 kings from the time of Solomon's death until Nebuchadnezzar II of Babylonia conquered that country and took its leaders into exile. The Bible said a few of them "**did what was right in the eyes of the LORD.**" This Bible Study looks at one of those good kings, Hezekiah.



A bas-relief from the Assyrian royal palace depicting Sargon II, who ruled Assyria during the time of Hezekiah.

The time of Hezekiah was a perilous time in Judah. By the middle of the 8th century BCE, the Assyrians, who controlled the territory to the north and east of Israel, had amassed a great empire. Assyria overran the Northern Kingdom of Israel and completed its conquest there in 721 BCE. The Southern Kingdom of Judah avoided conquest by Assyria only because Hezekiah's predecessor, King Ahaz, bought a degree of independence by paying tribute to the Assyrians (II Kings 16:7). Not only that, but Ahaz paid homage to Assyrian gods in order to please his new masters. When Hezekiah became king, Judah was not a free nation, and it was in full rebellion against God.



An artist's rendition of the Assyrian royal palace at Nineveh on the Tigris River. King Hezekiah was up against a mega-power.

The time of Hezekiah was also the time of the prophets Isaiah and Micah. Isaiah (*1st Isaiah*) prophesied in Judah during this time by condemning its religious practices: **"You, LORD, have abandoned your people, the descendants of Jacob. They are full of superstitions from the east...they embrace pagan customs"** (Is. 2:6). The prophet Micah was also active then. He promised God's punishment for worshipping these false gods: **"I will destroy your idols and your sacred stones from among you; you will no longer bow down to the work of your hands"** (Micah 5:13).

When Hezekiah succeeded Ahaz, Judah's economic situation was dire. The tribute demanded by Assyria required Judah to empty its treasury and strip the Temple to raise these funds. But Hezekiah boldly reversed Ahaz's policies. He stopped paying tribute to Assyria, an act that initially succeeded because Assyria was tied up dealing with a rebellion in Babylonia. The king proceeded to strengthen Judah's military preparations in anticipation of an attack from Assyria.

The authors of II Kings and II Chronicles regarded Hezekiah's religious reforms as his greatest accomplishment: **"He removed the high places, smashed the sacred stones, and cut down the Asherah poles. He broke into pieces the bronze snake Moses had made"** (because Israelites were worshipping it). He purified the Temple, renewed the Passover celebration, reorganized the priesthood, and **"held fast to the LORD."** II Chronicles 30 tells how King Hezekiah sent couriers throughout Judah with letters which read: **"People of Israel, return to the Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel...he will not turn his face from you if you return to him."**

Judah's King Hezekiah defied the mighty Assyrian Empire and instituted a major religious reform that replaced Ba'al and pagan god worship with the meaningful worship of God. His reforms occurred under historically difficult circumstances and offer a model for how God's leaders must have the courage and tenacity to promote worshipping him even when it is difficult to do so. Assyria was eventually able to quell its internal rebellion and reassert dominance over Judah and Hezekiah's successor Manasseh dismantled his religious reforms. Nevertheless, Hezekiah's piety, faithfulness and zeal for God inspired later successful religious reforms in Israel. **"There was no one like him among all the kings of Judah"** (II Kings 18:5).

WEEKLY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AT GRACE

WORSHIP ON SUNDAY. This coming Sunday, the 6th of November, is the Twenty-third Sunday after Pentecost. The Gospel reading is Luke 21:5-19. The liturgical color for this Sunday is green. Pastor Jaci and Church Musician Bobbie Bean will conduct the worship service, with communion, which starts at 10:30 AM.

At Grace, you can worship in a traditional setting in the Sanctuary, or you can participate in worship while remaining in your vehicle and tuning your radio to FM 94.1.

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

- © **PRAYER CONCERNS.** Please keep the following persons in your prayers:
- Sue Fondessy, Max Shiple, Marge Winters, Danny Miller, Joe Grayczyk, Bob Haas, Rosemary Jones, Donald Bench, Steve, Kathy Spangler, Jody Angelone, Mandi Palmer, LaVerne Edwards, Bev Burroughs, Ken Pettit, Carol Jacob, Bethany Collier, Leslee Bundy, Tom Szor, Shelly Sherman, Barbara Harger, Patricia Morral, Karen Southwyck, Carol Morgan, Dustin Schmidt, Chris Marquardt, Stephen Andrew, Dean Crandall, Kelly Troyer, Nadine Crisologos, Cheryl Hoot, Heather DeWitz, members of the Grace family who reside in nursing homes including Jim Flick (Commons of Providence, Sandusky), Donna Foss (Parkcliff), Sandy Cutchall (Genoa), and Joan Dietrich (Genoa), 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.
- © **ATTENDANCE AND OFFERING LAST WEEK.** 48 persons attended worship last Sunday. Last Sunday's offering total was \$3,092. Offerings need to average \$2,789 per week to meet the 2022 offering budget target. Recent offerings have been down, and Grace is now slightly behind its offering budget goal. **Thank you to all who attend worship and contribute regular offerings.**
- © **ANNUAL MEETING REPORT.** Grace's second 2022 Annual Meeting took place after worship last Sunday, the 6th of November, with 42 voting members in attendance. During this meeting, Grace's congregation approved the minutes of its 30 January Congregational Meeting, approved a "*resolution of thanks and appreciation*" for outgoing Treasurer Randy Jacobs, received a presentation on the 2023 budget, approved the budget as presented, and elected Congregation Council members for 2023.
- **2023 Budget Summary.** The chart (next page) summarizes the approved budget. If Grace realizes its income objective and encounters no major unexpected expenses in 2023, it will end the year with its fifth consecutive surplus.

	2021 Actual	2022 Projected	2023 Budget
UNRESTRICTED INCOME 84% of Offerings + Rentals	\$ 145,256	\$ 142,195	\$ 141,900
TOTAL GENERAL FUND EXPENDITURES	\$ 125,254	\$ 124,424	\$ 133,797
NET: INCOME LESS EXPENDITURES	\$ 20,002	\$ 17,771	\$ 8,103

- **2023 Congregation Council.** Officers and Board of Ministry Chairmen who were elected to serve on the Council in the coming year are:

President: Gary Anderson
Secretary: Karen Hammel
Treasurer: Mike Schlievert
Financial Secretary: Deb Boos (elected to 2-year term in 2021)
Chair, Congregational Life: Mary Schlievert
Chair, Property: Steve Blausey
Chair, Witness & Mission: Nancy Pries
Chair, Worship & Music: Joan Eckermann

- **Allocation of 2022 Surplus.** The Congregation received a report on plans for handling the anticipated current year surplus of \$16,000 to \$18,000. The Council has established a **Capital Reserve Fund** as a savings account for future capital expenses with an initial balance of \$35,000. It is now invested in a 12-month CD at 4.65%. The Council plans to divide the surplus between the Capital Reserve Fund and special benevolences. Recommendations for special benevolence causes may be submitted to any Council member.

UPCOMING ACTIVITES AND EVENTS			
Date	Event	Time	Location
10 November, Thursday	Council Meeting	7:00 PM	Grace
13 November, Sunday	Ladies Night Out	5:30 PM	Oregon Inn
19 November, Saturday	Fall Clean-Up	9:30 AM	Grace
19 December, Monday	Red Cross Blood Drive	12:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Fellowship Hall
Regular Weekly Events:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday mornings, at 10:30 AM, Worship, with communion (<i>in the Sanctuary</i>) • Tuesday evenings, at 7:00 PM, Choir Practice 			

- © **ADVENT WORSHIP PLANS.** Plan to attend as many of the 2022 Advent and Christmas Worship events as you can. The **Hanging of the Greens** (*putting up Christmas decorations in the Sanctuary*) will take place after worship on Christ the King Sunday, the 20th of November. The **first Sunday in Advent** this year is the 27th of November; this is the beginning of the new liturgical year. This year Grace will have **four Advent Soup Suppers and Evening Prayer services** on the 30th of November and the 7th, 14th and 21st of December. This year's Advent Special Offerings will be contributed to the ELCA's "*A Clinic Visit for a Child*" program. Grace will have its **Christmas Eve Worship Service** on Saturday evening, the 24th of December, at 8:00 PM. On Sunday, the 25th of December, Grace's traditional **Christmas Carol and Scripture Worship Service** will take place during the Sunday worship hour at 10:30 AM. There will be a regular worship service on Sunday, the 1st of January 2023.
- © **LADIES NIGHT OUT.** The next Ladies Night Out will be on Sunday evening, the 13th of November, at the **Oregon Inn**, at 5:30 PM. Women from Bethlehem and Grace are invited. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex.
- © **CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR LUTHER HOME OF MERCY RESIDENTS.** Grace members are encouraged to make Christmas special for a resident of Luther Home of Mercy. The names and their wish list will be available on the table in the Narthex on November 13th, 20th and 27th.
- © **OPERATION OREO HONORS VETERANS DAY.** Veteran's Day, November 11th, is a National holiday set aside to thank and honor ALL those who served honorably in the military – in wartime or peacetime. Take a moment and thank the Veterans around you.
- Please keep all military personnel in your prayers, but especially: SGT Stephen Simkus and Cadet Julian Sanchez.
 - Anyone wishing to donate to Operation Oreo to help offset the cost of shipping and also 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 AMERICAN WINE TASTING EVENT.** Wreaths Across America is sponsoring a "Wine Tasting Night" on November 27th from 1:00 to 3:00 PM at the Mockingbird on Mill Road at 4408 N. Elliston-Trowbridge Road, Graytown, Ohio. Proceeds will support the cost of wreaths placed in the Ottawa County cemeteries in December for Veterans. RSVP to Shelley (419) 260-7685. For more information check out the flyer on the Fellowship Hall bulletin board.
- © **THANKSGIVING WORSHIP INVITATION.** **St. John's UCC, 448 Rice Street, Elmore** invites everyone to a Thanksgiving Service on Wednesday, November 23rd at 7:00 PM. Thanksgiving is an important time to come together in a worship setting to give thanks. We will join together to give thanks to the One who has shared great blessings with us. Everyone is **WELCOME!**

© **BACKPACKS FOR HUMANS** (<https://backpacknation.space/>). This 501(c) (3) organization serves people in crisis in the Toledo area. Current needs for donated items include blanket throws, sheets, and towels. Please bring donation items to the church and place them in the collection box in the Narthex.

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

DATE	DEACONS	LECTORS
13 November	Deb and Jeff Boos	Michelle Timbrook
20 November	Gene Michel and Alan Wolfe	Mary Lou Kohli
27 November	Jennifer & Mark Haar	Mark Haar
4 December	Mary & Mike Schlievert	Mike Schlievert

© **ELMORE FOOD PANTRY.** The Grace Food Pantry item for November is 46 oz. cans of tomato juice. Grace hosts the Elmore Food Pantry. The Food Pantry 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 is open.

- **ELMORE COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER.** Grace is supporting Elmore’s traditional Thanksgiving dinner. The members of Grace are asked to provide 20 pies (preferably apple, cherry, & pumpkin). There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Pies are to be delivered to Woodmore H. S.
- **Volunteers are needed to assist in serving the Thanksgiving Dinner.** Volunteers are needed on Wednesday, the 23rd from 9:00 AM to noon and on Thanksgiving Day, the 24th from 8:00 AM to Noon or from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. Contact Bob Daniel at bdaniel808@yahoo.com to sign up.

Our Prayer: O God, the protector of all who trust in you, without you nothing is strong, nothing is holy. Embrace us with your mercy, that with you as our ruler and guide, we may live through what is temporary without losing what is eternal, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

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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