

Grace Family Weekly Message

14 July 2022



**WORSHIP AT GRACE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
THIS SUNDAY, THE 17TH OF JULY, IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL.**

Sunday's Gospel reading is Luke 10:38-42. (See page 3 for more information)

THE RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE ON MONDAY, JULY 18TH, NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT. VOLUNTEERS TO WORK DURING THE DRIVE AND TO PROVIDE SOUP AND COOKIES ARE NEEDED. See page 3 for more information.

A BIBLE STUDY ON MOSES AND ISRAEL'S STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM FROM SLAVERY

This is the third in a current Bible Study series on Moses. This week's study looks at Moses' epic struggle to get Pharaoh to agree to free the Israelites, which culminated with the initiation of the Passover Festival and the deaths of Egypt's firstborn.

Exodus 7:1-5 (NRSV)

¹Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. ²You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country. ³But I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and though I multiply my signs and wonders in Egypt, ⁴he will not listen to you. Then I will lay my hand on Egypt and with mighty acts of judgment I will bring my people the Israelites, company by company, out of Egypt. ⁵And the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and bring the Israelites out of it."

We concluded last week's Bible Study on Moses with his first unsuccessful appeal to Pharaoh to allow him to lead the Hebrew slaves out of their servitude in Egypt so they could worship

God in the Sinai wilderness. The starting point for this study is God's rejection of slavery as an acceptable human condition. God told Moses, "***I am the Lord, and I will free you from being slaves to the Egyptians***" (Ex. 6:6). God promised to rescue the Israelites from slavery but putting that promise into action had to be



Egyptian Pharaohs like Ramses II used thousands of slaves, including Hebrew slaves, to provide the labor for massive construction projects like this temple complex near Luxor, Egypt.

worked out through a long, arduous series of appeals and plagues involving Moses, Aaron, and Pharaoh.

The Exodus 7 text (above) identifies the actors in this drama and their relationships. God, who is over all, commissioned Moses to be his agent and gave him special powers to demonstrate “**signs and wonders**” to the Egyptians. Since Moses had no confidence in his ability to speak to Pharaoh (“**my lips are uncircumcised**,” Ex. 6:12) Aaron would be like a prophet to Moses and speak for him.

In Exodus 7:3, God said, “**I will harden Pharaoh’s heart**” so that he will “**not listen to you**.” We should not believe that God was so underhanded as to deliberately cause Pharaoh to refuse Moses’ demands and thereby cause death and destruction for his own people. Rather, God gives all of us the created freedom to accept or reject his commandments. The Exodus writers interpreted that as hardening one’s heart. Pharaoh misused that freedom to reject Moses’ (God’s) demands for Israelite freedom. The ten plagues that followed became “**mighty acts of judgment**” that were the consequences of Pharaoh’s rejection of God.

. **Plagues of Blood and Frogs.** Moses and Aaron’s next attempt at winning Pharaoh’s agreement involved sorcery. God had given Moses a staff that became a snake when he threw it down, but Pharaoh was not impressed. God responded by turning the waters of Egypt into blood. Next, Moses threatened a plague of frogs that would overwhelm the people, even in their homes. Pharaoh agreed to let the Israelites go if the frogs were taken away, but when that was done, he changed his mind. Pharaoh did not negotiate in good faith.

Plague of Gnats and Flies. Next, God sent plagues of gnats and then flies. The flies became so detestable that Pharaoh offered a compromise. He would let the Israelites offer sacrifices to Yahweh there in Egypt. Moses knew that would not get the Hebrews out of Egypt, so he turned that offer down.

Further Plagues: Livestock, Boils, Hail, Locusts, and Darkness. God instructed Moses to keep trying to get Pharaoh to agree, but Pharaoh rejected each new entreaty. Judgments followed that brought the Egyptians a devastating livestock disease, an epidemic of skin disease, and a once-in-500 years hailstorm that destroyed crops and livestock. After a locust invasion, Pharaoh offered another unacceptable compromise. The Israelite men could go and worship Yahweh in the wilderness, but the Israelite women and children must stay. After a three-day darkness plague, Pharaoh proposed another bad faith compromise. He would let the people go but their flocks and herds must stay. Moses had no choice but to refuse this deal as well. Pharaoh then told Moses he would consider no more demands from Moses.

The Last Plague: Death for Egypt’s Firstborn. That was the last straw for God. God was prepared to strike down the firstborn in all of Egypt, but he first had to protect the Israelites from this calamity. God gave instructions for Israelite families to slaughter a lamb, post the lamb’s blood on the doorposts of their houses, as a sign for the angel of death to pass over those homes, and to eat the lamb in a solemn feast. These instructions became the Passover that commemorates the solemn night when God delivered his people from slavery in Egypt.

Exodus 12:29-32 (NRSV)

29 At midnight the LORD struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock. 30 Pharaoh arose in the night, he and all his officials and all the Egyptians; and there was a loud cry in Egypt, for there was not a house without someone dead. 31 Then he summoned Moses and Aaron in the night, and said, "Rise up, go away from my people, both you and the Israelites! Go, worship the LORD, as you said. 32 Take your flocks and your herds, as you said, and be gone. And bring a blessing on me too!"

The lesson for us in this story is that God did not just snap his fingers so the Hebrew slaves in Egypt could walk free. God works through people whom he calls to act and the struggles that are necessary to work out God's promises can be long and demanding. In this epic, God worked through Moses and Aaron and a series of calamities that finally set the Israelites free.

WEEKLY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AT GRACE

© ***WORSHIP ON SUNDAY.*** This coming Sunday, the 17th of July, is the Sixth Sunday after Pentecost. The Gospel reading is Luke 10:38-42. The liturgical color is green. Worship starts at 10:30 AM, in the Fellowship Hall. Pastor Jaci Tiell and Church Musician Bobbie Bean will lead the worship service.

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:

The Family of Lowell (Skip) Geldien

Jody Angelone, Darla Brown, Mandi Palmer, LaVerne Edwards, Bev Burroughs, Kathy Spangler, Ken Pettit, Pastor John Bock, Carol Jacob, Bethany Collier, Leslee Bundy, Tom Szor, Shelly Sherman, Barbara Harger, Patricia Morral, Karen Southwyck, Jay Southwyck, Jessica 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), 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.

© ***BLOOD DRIVE AT GRACE.*** The American Red Cross blood drive at Grace next Monday, July 18th, from 12:00 to 6:00 PM is a "go." Volunteers are still needed to set up and tear down. Donations of soup and cookies are still needed, plus additional volunteers are needed to serve them. **If you can help with this blood drive, please sign up on the volunteer list on the table in the Fellowship Hall or contact Joan Eckermann.** More blood donors are needed too; there are still open times.



- © **ATTENDANCE AND OFFERING LAST WEEK.** 41 persons attended worship last Sunday. Offerings last week were \$1,155. 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 contribute regular offerings.**
- © **GRACE COUNCIL MEETINGS.** The Council's most recent meeting was an in-person meeting at the Church on the 9th of June. Discussion and decision items were reported in the 16 and 23 June editions of the **Weekly Message**. The next Council Meeting will be on Thursday, 11 August, at the church.

UPCOMING ACTIVITES AND EVENTS			
Date	Event	Time	Location
18 July, Monday	Red Cross Blood Drive	12:00 – 5:00 PM	Fellowship Hall
9 August, Tuesday	Board of Worship	7:00 PM	Grace
11 August, Thursday	Council Meeting	7:00 PM	Grace
16 August, Tuesday	Board of Congregational Life	7:00 PM	Grace
11 September, Sunday	Rally Day (<i>Personal Care Kit Assembly with Ice Cream Social</i>)	11:30 AM	Fellowship Hall
25 September, Sunday	Chicken BBQ Fund Raiser	11:30 AM	Grace
Regular Weekly Events:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sunday mornings, at 10:30 AM, Worship, with communion (<i>in the Fellowship Hall</i>) 			

JUNE 2022 FINANCIAL REPORT – A BRIEF SUMMARY			
CATEGORY	June: Actual Income & Expenses	Year to Date Actuals²	2022 Budget for six months³
Offerings ¹	\$12,321	\$77,724	\$72,500
Unrestricted Income ⁴	\$13,268	\$74,056	\$69,700
Operational Expenses	\$14,439	\$62,120	\$62,779
Net: Income vs Expenses	(\$1,171)	\$11,936	\$6,921
<i>Notes:</i>			
¹ 10% of "Offerings" are allocated to Benevolences; 6% are allocated to the Maintenance Fund.			
² To determine current budget status, compare "Year to Date Actuals" with the "2022 Budget."			
³ The 2022 Budget is calendarized to show the amount allocated through the current month.			
⁴ Unrestricted Income" is 84% of offerings plus rental and miscellaneous income.			

- © **OPERATION OREO.** A handwritten card was sent to each of the soldiers this week. This was just a little note to remind them that they are thought of and prayed for daily from their friends at Grace.
 - Please keep all military personnel 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

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

DATE	DEACONS	LECTORS
17 July	Jennifer & Mark Haar	Mark Haar
24 July	Jean & Merlyn Weng	Ruth Anderson
31 July	Deb & Jeff Boos	Mary Lou Kohli
7 August	Mary & Mike Schlievert	Rachel Beeler

© **BETHLEHEM WOMEN'S RETREAT.** Plans for the 2022 Bethlehem Women's Retreat have now been set. This year's Retreat will be on September 23rd – 25th at Staybridge Suites in Rossford. Women at Grace are invited to participate—contact Ruth Ann Anderson (419-607-3164 or ruthannand@gmail.com) if you are interested or want more information. Women who plan to participate are encouraged to sign up as soon as possible so retreat planning can be completed.

The retreat theme this year will be based on Psalm 100:5 "***For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.***" Discovery sessions during the Retreat will center on genealogy, both in the Old and New Testaments, and in participants' personal lives. More details will be available as the time of the Retreat draws near.

The rooms available for Retreat participants are considered King rooms. The rooms consist of one King size bed and a pull-out couch and a kitchenette. The cost is \$160.00 for a single occupancy room for two nights, or \$95.00 per person for a double occupancy room. Also, if a person is interested in attending but is unable to stay overnight a \$25.00 donation is requested to help with other expenses. The deadline for payment is Sunday, September 4th.

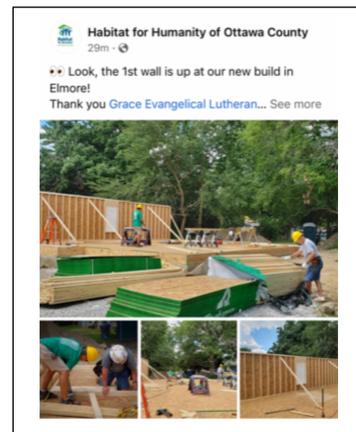
If you are interested in attending the Bethlehem Women's Retreat in September, please contact Ruth Ann Anderson.

© **GRACE CHICKEN BBQ FUND RAISER.** Grace will hold a chicken barbecue fund raising event on Sunday, the 25th of September, starting at 11:30 AM. Proceeds from this year's Chicken BBQ will go to the **Ottawa County Family Advocacy Center.** This organization needs financial contributions to provide financial assistance to grandparents raising grandchildren and to feed Ottawa County children during summer months, to name two of their programs. There is a flyer on this organization in the Fellowship Hallway bulletin board. The Ottawa County



Family Advocacy Center is a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization (<https://ocfamilyadvocacy.org/>).

- ◎ **ELMORE FOOD PANTRY.** The Grace Food Pantry item for July is 10 oz. cans of soup. Grace hosts the Elmore Food Pantry. It 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.
- ◎ **GOD'S WORK PROJECTS.** 112 personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief will be assembled at the church on Sept 11th, **God's Work Our Hands Sunday.** The appeal for donated items to place in these kits was successful—no more items are needed. **Thank you to everyone who responded to this appeal.**
- ◎ **BACKPACKS FOR HUMANS** (<https://backpacknation.space/>). This 501(c) (3) organization serves people in crisis in the Toledo area. Now that it is summer, its current priority needs are for ball caps, sunscreen, 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 Fellowship Hall.
- ◎ **Habitat for Humanity of Ottawa County** (<https://www.habitatottawacounty.org/>). Work is progressing on the new Habitat for Humanity home being built at 562 Ames Street in Elmore. A special thank you goes to Mary Schlievert for providing lunches on behalf of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church for the volunteers who were working on this project on Tuesday, the 12th of July!
- ◎ **MILLERS RECEIPTS.** Members of the Grace Family who shop at Millers New Market Grocery in Genoa should 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).



Our Prayer: Eternal God, draw near to us in Christ, and grace us with your presence. Amid the cares of our lives, make us attentive to your presence, that we may treasure your word above all else.

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

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; 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.