

Grace Family Weekly Message

26 May 2022



**WORSHIP AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH THIS SUNDAY,
THE 29th OF MAY. Sunday's Gospel reading is John 17:20-26.**

(See page 3 for more information)

A BIBLE STUDY ON THE TEXTS IN HANDEL'S MESSIAH, Part I

George Frideric Handel's oratorio, the **Messiah**, is known and loved by Christians everywhere. The libretto or texts that are sung in the **Messiah** are all taken from the Bible. The scriptures in the **Messiah** describe the dramatic narrative of Jesus Christ's Nativity, Ministry, Passion, Resurrection and Ascension. Our next Bible Study series reflects on selected texts in the **Messiah** to help us understand the deepest meanings of how God acted to save us.

After its opening overture, the **Messiah** begins with these words from Second Isaiah:

Isaiah 40:1-5 (NRSV)

***¹Comfort, O comfort my people,
says your God.***

***²Speak tenderly to Jerusalem,
and cry to her
that she has served her term,
that her penalty is paid,
that she has received from the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.***

***³A voice cries out:
"In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for our God.***

***⁴Every valley shall be lifted up,
and every mountain and hill be made low;
the uneven ground shall become level,
and the rough places a plain.***

***⁵Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed,
and all people shall see it together,
for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."***

Isaiah 40:1-5 (KJV)

*Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith
your God.
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry
unto her,
that her warfare is accomplished,
that her iniquity is pardoned:
for she hath received of the LORD's hand
double for all her sins.
The voice of him that crieth in the
wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the
LORD,
make straight in the desert a highway for
our God.
Every valley shall be exalted,
and every mountain and hill shall be made
low:
and the crooked shall be made straight,
and the rough places plain:
And the glory of the LORD shall be
revealed,*

George Frideric Handel was a Christian and a Lutheran. In 1741, Handel and the librettist (a composer of texts for operas and vocal music) Charles Jennens combined their talents to create an oratorio that told the story of the Messiah from his promised coming through his death, resurrection, and ascension. Jennens selected the **Messiah** texts from the King James Version of the Bible, which was what was available at the time. Handel composed the music in 24 days. The **Messiah** premiered in 1742

and subsequently became one of the Western world's best-known and most frequently performed choral works.

The first words of the **Messiah** (Isaiah 40:1) are a message from God: "**Comfort ye, comfort ye my people.**" The **Messiah** begins with a message of consolation. The Hebrew word used by the prophet Second Isaiah means "*to be consoled*" or "*to be comforted.*" God spoke through the prophet to tell "**my (his) people**" it's going to be OK; I'm going to act to end your suffering. Then in the second verse, the prophet announced that Israel "**has served her term...her penalty is paid,**" indeed, that God had punished Israel "**double for all her sins.**"

Several centuries earlier, God had led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt and gave them a promised homeland in Canaan, but the people disobeyed God and persisted in worshipping the gods of the peoples who also lived in that area. According to the Old Testament prophets, God's punishments for their disobedience and false worship included the Assyrian conquest of the Northern Kingdom in 722 BCE and the conquest and exile of Judah to Babylonia in 586 BCE. Second Isaiah prophesied in the late 6th century BCE after the Persians conquered Babylonia and allowed the Israelites to return to Israel. The **Messiah** texts began with God's promise to stop this punishment and save his people from their sins in Isaiah 40.

The third verse contains the essence of God's consolation for a long-persecuted people. They are instructed to "**prepare the way of the LORD**" and to be ready for an event that will turn the world upside down: "**Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low.**" The **Messiah** texts that follow come from Haggai and Malachi and were selected to begin to explain God's plan for fulfilling that promise.

Malachi 3:1 (NIV)

See, I am sending my messenger to prepare the way before me, and the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple. The messenger of the covenant in whom you delight—indeed, he is coming, says the LORD of hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming, and who can stand when he appears?

Malachi 3:1-2 (KJV)

*¹Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me:
and the Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in:
behold, he shall come, saith the LORD of hosts.
²But who may abide the day of his coming?
and who shall stand when he appeareth?*

Both Haggai and Malachi prophesied after the exile and Israelite return to their land (*Haggai around 520 BCE; Malachi about 420 BCE*). Both prophets contributed to the growing expectations of the people that God would send a Messiah to save them. In this text, Malachi said, "**the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple...indeed, he is coming says the Lord of hosts.**"

The Biblical texts in the **Messiah** begin with the good news of God's promise of a savior, a deliverer, a Messiah. The divine drama of God's acts to save his people promised deliverance from persecution in Isaiah 40 and then in Haggai and Malachi describe the one who will deliver the people as the Lord himself.

Next week we will look at the next **Messiah** texts that describe the coming deliverer and culminate in the nativity (Christmas).

WEEKLY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AT GRACE

WORSHIP ON SUNDAY. This coming Sunday, the 29th of May, is the Seventh Sunday of Easter. The liturgical color is white. Worship starts at 10:30 AM. The Gospel reading is John 17:20-26. 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.**
 - **Pentecost.** Pentecost will be celebrated on Sunday, the 5th of June. The Pentecost service will be in the Sanctuary—plan to wear red that day. Grace members have ordered 22 red geraniums for Pentecost Sunday so expect to see a festive chance!
 - **Summer Worship.** Tentative plans are to start worshipping in the air-conditioned Fellowship Hall on the 12th of June.
 - **Rally Day.** Rally Day (God’s Work—Our Hands Sunday) is the 11th of September and will feature the assembly of personal care kits after worship. An ice cream social is planned for that event.
- © **PRAYER CONCERNS.** Please keep the following persons in your prayers:

The Family of Harold Patterson

LaVerne Edwards, Bev Burroughs, Kathy Spangler, Ken Pettit, Pastor John Bock, Carol Jacob, Pastor Karl Kessler, Angela Scardina, Bethany Collier, Leslee Bundy, Tom Szor, Shelly Sherman, Barbara Harger, 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.

- © **ATTENDANCE AND OFFERING LAST WEEK.** 53 persons attended worship last Sunday. Offering contributions on Sunday were \$1,587. 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.
- © **THANK YOU TO GRACE'S CHOIR!** A special thank you goes to Grace's Choir and Choir Director Bobbie Bean for the Choir's much-appreciated contributions to Grace's worship services. They have blessed us with choral introits, liturgy leadership, and anthems throughout the last nine months. The Choir sang during the May 22nd worship and now will take a "summer break" until they plan to resume in September.
- © **Grace Council Meetings.** The Council's most recent meeting was a Zoom™ meeting on the 12th of May. Discussion and decision items were reported in the 12 and 19 May editions of the **Grace Weekly Message**. The next Council Meeting will be on Thursday, 9 June, at the church.

UPCOMING ACTIVITES AND EVENTS			
Date	Event	Time	Location
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
16 August, Tuesday	Board of Congregational Life	7:00 PM	Grace
11 September, Sunday	Rally Day: Personal Care Kit Assembly with Ice Cream Social	11:30 AM	Fellowship Hall
25 September, Sunday	Chicken BBQ Fund Raiser	11:30 AM	
Regular Weekly Events:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuesdays and Thursdays: 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM, Elmore Senior Citizens (<i>meets in the Fellowship Hall</i>) • Sunday mornings, at 10:30 AM, Worship, with communion (<i>in the Sanctuary</i>) 			

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

- © **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
29 May	Jean and Merlyn Weng	Rachel Beeler
5 June	Mary & Mike Schlievert	Judy Zimmerman
12 June	Deb & Jeff Boos	Jean Weng
19 June	Randy Jacobs & Gary Anderson	Joan Eckermann

- © **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.
- © **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.** 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:

- **Bars of soap** are still needed
- **Fingernail clippers** are still needed
- **The collection box is on the table in the Narthex**

© **COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES:**

- **Habitat for Humanity House.** Habitat for Humanity is building a house at 562 Ames Street, in Elmore, with construction expected to take place in June. Groundbreaking has taken place and final details are being worked out for construction to start. Volunteers to work on the project will be needed. Habitat for Humanity will release information regarding the work schedule, persons to contact if interested in working on the project and support that will be provided for the workers in the way of lunches, drinks, snacks, etc. Workers must be a minimum age of 16 and all skill levels are accepted.
- **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 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 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. 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: Gracious God, may we also be consoled by your promise of a Savior to save your people from their sins.

GRACE CONTACT INFORMATION		
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