

The Grace Family Weekly Message

8 July 2021



PLEASE JOIN US FOR WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY, THE 11th of JULY. The Gospel reading for Sunday is Mark 6:14-29. *(Worship will be outdoors in the Grace parking lot)*

During July and August, worship at Grace will start at 10:30 AM. Pastor Jaci's installation will be at Bethlehem Lutheran Church on the 22nd of July at 6:30 PM. Grace's members are invited to attend. Grace will host an Installation Celebration on the 25th of July. *(See page 4 for details and more activity dates)*

- **Volunteers are needed to assist with the Red Cross Blood Drive at Grace on the 19th of July: Contact Joan Eckermann** *(See page 5 for details)*
- **4-5 volunteers are needed to help with the Ice Cream Social after the Installation Celebration on the 25th of July: Contact Mary Schlievert. Plan to attend the celebration and enjoy the fellowship!** *(See page 4 for details)*
- **The Board of Worship meets today via Zoom.**

A BIBLE STUDY ON CELEBRATING GREAT VICTORIES. This week's Bible study considers how an ancient Israelite celebration relates to our own celebrations of victory.

Exodus 15:1-3 *(as translated from the Hebrew Bible)*

¹Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the LORD:

***"Let us sing about the LORD with jubilation,
for he triumphed gloriously,
horses and their drivers,
he threw down into the sea.***

**²"The LORD is my strength and my rallying cry.
He became my salvation.
He is my God, and I will praise him,
my father's God, and I will exalt him.**

**³The LORD is a man of war;
the LORD is his name.**

This past week, on the 4th of July, the USA celebrated the 245th anniversary of the signing of its **Declaration of Independence** from England in 1776. For us, this day is a day of joy and celebrations of national pride. Exodus 15 also describes a special day of independence, joy and celebration so it might be interesting for us to study that record to help us understand how the Bible views great events that give distinct groups of people their identity and become causes for remembrance and celebration.

Last week's Bible Study discussed how songs and music can express joy and celebration. Exodus 15, the Song of Moses and Miriam, is one of those songs. In the

days that led up to this celebration, Moses organized an “exodus” of Hebrew slaves out of their servitude in Egypt. After initially agreeing to let the Israelites go free, the Egyptian Pharaoh (*often identified as Ramses II, 1279-1213 BCE*), relented and sent his charioteers in pursuit of the Hebrews to capture and re-enslave them. This event took place 400 to 600 years before the story of the exodus was written so its historicity and precise details are difficult to pin down. Whether the decisive event occurred at the Sea of Reeds, as described in Exodus 13:19, or the Red Sea, as some interpretations and tradition hold, the Hebrews made a successful escape from the Nile Delta area while the pursuing Egyptians were mired down in its swamps or drowned in the sea. The result was that by the time the book of Exodus was written, the Israelites had formed a vivid collective memory of their ancestors’ miraculous escape from Egypt.

Their miraculous escape at the Sea of Reeds/Red Sea was certainly the cause for remembrance and celebration that is glorified in the Song of Moses and Miriam. Let’s consider the key ideas in Exodus 15’s first three verses:

He (God) threw the horses and their drivers down into the sea. The horses and drivers were the Pharaoh’s chariots and mounted drivers, who were probably armed with bows and arrows. They were an elite force, which on dry land would have quickly captured the Israelites, but they were no match for the swamp and marshes of the Israelites escape route. The important thing to note is that this song gives God, “**He**,” credit for winning the victory. Moses and the Israelites simply did what they were told to do—move as quickly as possible through this area—while God fought the battle for them.

The Lord is my strength, my rallying cry, my salvation. The reason for the escape at the Sea of Reeds/Red Sea was not because the Israelite people were strong and courageous. This Biblical song of victory attributes all strength, valor, and decisive action to God. It reflects the humble gratitude of a people who believe that the good things they receive come from God, not from their extraordinary merit or effort. As we Lutherans know, salvation comes solely from God’s grace.

The Lord is my God, and I will praise and exalt him. Gratitude for what God gives his people starts with an acknowledgement that God is God, “**my God**.” A proper response to God’s gifts is to praise and laud him. This, in fact, brings us to one of the key purposes of worship—to thank and praise God for his acts of deliverance.

The Lord is a warrior. It may be troublesome to think of God as a warrior, but the Hebrew text literally says, “**the Lord (Yahweh) is a man of war**.” We visualize warriors as people who engage opponents with violent actions, but what the Biblical writer is saying for sure is that God is a God who fights for his people. This image of a fearless, heroic warrior would have been appropriate 3,000 years ago. What image would be appropriate today?

The Israelites’ Song of Moses and Miriam recognizes that God, not us, is the source of victory and that our response should be to praise and extol God for his acts of deliverance. The Israelite’s escape from the Egyptians at the Sea of Reeds/Red Sea may have some fascinating similarities to the American Declaration of Independence, but for Christians today to sing a song of victory and celebration, we should turn to the hymns that celebrate the Easter victory. Charles Wesley’s hymn, “**Jesus Christ is**

Risen Today” (Hymn #365), which we joyfully sing every Easter, is a song of victory and celebration for us. The words of its first verse do indeed “**praise and exalt**” God:

*Jesus Christ is risen today – Alleluia
Our triumphant holy day – Alleluia
Who did once upon the cross – Alleluia
Suffer to redeem our loss – Alleluia*

WEEKLY NEWS AND ACTIVITIES AT GRACE

- © **WORSHIP ON SUNDAY.** Worship this Sunday, the 11th of July, the seventh Sunday after Pentecost, will be in the church parking lot. Remember that worship at Grace now starts at 10:30 AM, not 10:00 AM. Pastor Don Clark and Church Musician Bobbie Bean will conduct the service. This Sunday’s Gospel reading is Mark 6:14-29. **WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING ALL MEMBERS OF THE GRACE FAMILY TO WORSHIP THIS SUNDAY! VISITORS ARE ESPECIALLY WELCOME!** *(This Sunday’s color is green!)*
- © **RETURNING TO WORSHIP INSIDE.** A recent informal survey showed that most members of the Grace family are now ready to return to worship inside once we have a plan worked out to do this. Questions concerning whether, when, where and how to worship inside were discussed again at the last Council meeting and the Board of Worship was asked to develop a plan to answer those questions. The Board of Worship will meet this evening to develop a plan for returning to worship inside. It is important to understand that worship inside will not be the same as it was before covid and that there will be special conditions to be followed.
- © **ATTENDANCE AND OFFERINGS LAST SUNDAY.** 36 persons attended last Sunday’s worship; offerings totaled \$2,797. Offerings for the year remain just slightly ahead of the budget target of \$2,885 per week. Thank you to all who attend worship and contribute their regular offerings.
- © **PRAYER CONCERNS.** Please keep the following persons in your prayers:
Linda Stewart, Carol Morgan, Amphy Haar, Dustin Schmidt, Chris Marquardt, Sue Fondessy, Donald Bench, Annabelle Howe, Dana Weirich, Karen Schlievert, Jeannette Young, Sean, Bethany Collier, Delbert Weng, Dan Van Etten, Scott Taylor, Jody Angelone, Ron Dangler, Jen and Steve, Bob and Marge Griffin, Jeanne Haar, Jim Flick, Sandy Duty, Josh Hunker, Jeff and Laryn Wheeler, Peggy Michel Noftz, Stephen Andrew, Bertha Marquardt, Dean Crandall, Kelly Troyer, Arnold and Donna Foss, Mitzi Paule, Nadine Crisologos, Joan Dietrich, Sandy Cutchall, Cheryl Hoot, Dick and Ruth Hammel, Reed Oestreich, Heather DeWitz, Grace members who reside in nursing homes 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.

© **INSTALLATION.** Pastor Jaci’s installation service for both Bethlehem and Grace will take place at Bethlehem Lutheran Church, 106 West Plumer, Toledo OH, on the 22nd of July. The service will start at 6:30 PM. Grace’s members are invited and encouraged to attend this important event in the life of these churches.

© **INSTALLATION CELEBRATION AND ICE CREAM SOCIAL.** On Sunday, the 25th of July, there will be an installation celebration at Grace. The worship service will conclude with an Ice Cream Social. Plan to bring your lawn chairs and join in the fellowship. The Board of Congregational Life needs 4-5 volunteers to help serve cake, ice cream and punch for this celebration. Volunteers will need to wear masks and food service gloves (gloves will be provided). A volunteer will also be needed to hand out chalk and bubbles to kids and help them find a safe place to use those items.

Dates of Upcoming Activities at Grace	
8 July	Board of Worship @ 7:00 PM
13 July	Board of Witness & Mission @ 5:00 PM
15 July	Grace Council @ 7:00 PM
19 July	Red Cross Blood Drive @ Grace
22 July	Installation at Bethlehem @ 6:30 PM
25 July	Installation Celebration and Ice Cream Social at Grace after worship
5 Aug	Board of Congregational Life
29 Aug	Blessing of the Backpacks during worship
12 Sep	Rally Day (School backpack assembly)
19 Sep	Organ recital at Solomon Lutheran Church @ 4:00 PM

© **COUNCIL MEETINGS.** The Grace Council held its most recent meeting via Zoom on the 17th of June. A report on discussions and actions taken during that meeting was in the 24 June **Grace Family Weekly Message**. The next Council meeting will be on Thursday, the 15th of July.

© **JUNE 2021 FINANCIAL REPORT – A BRIEF SUMMARY**

CATEGORY	May: Actual Income & Expenses	Year to Date Actuals ²	2021 Budget for six months ³
Offerings ¹	\$12,691	\$76,967	\$75,000
Unrestricted Income ⁴	\$12,434	\$72,806	\$72,100
Operational Expenses	\$11,166	\$62,094	\$64,866
Net: Income vs Expenses	\$1,269	\$10,712	\$7,234

Notes:

¹10% of “Offerings” are allocated to Benevolences; 6% are allocated to the Maintenance Fund.

²To determine current budget status, compare “Year to Date Actuals” with the “2021 Budget.”

³The 2021 Budget is calendarized to show the amount allocated through the current month.

⁴“Unrestricted Income” is 84% of offerings plus rental and miscellaneous income.

© **CUSTODIAN POSITION ELIMINATED.** The Board of Property recently completed a thorough study of Grace’s requirements and procedures for church cleaning and upkeep, including the current situation where Grace has two part-time positions dedicated to those purposes. As a result of this evaluation, the Board decided that keeping the Custodian’s position as a paid position is no longer justified and that the duties of this position can be handled by volunteers. The Board of Property is identifying previous custodial functions that will now be fulfilled by

volunteers. The Board of Property, on behalf of the Grace congregation, expresses its sincere thanks to John Stolar for his service to the church while serving as its Custodian.

© **CHURCH KEYS.** Steve Simkus and the Board of Property are putting together a log of everyone who has a key for the church. If you have a key to the church and you have not already given your name to Steve Simkus, please let him know you have a key.

© **2022 ELCA YOUTH GATHERING.** Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and their adult leaders from across the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America gather for a week of faith formation known as the ELCA Youth Gathering.



Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives. Youth who are in 8th to 12th grade at the time of registration (Fall 2021) are eligible to attend. Registration starts in September

so if you are interested in attending, please let Pastor Jaci know soon!!

© **DEACON SCHEDULE.** Deacons scheduled to serve in upcoming worship services are:

- **11 July, Sunday: Mary & Mike Schlievert**
- **18 July, Sunday: Joan Eckermann & Gary Anderson**
- **25 July, Sunday: Rachel Beeler & Pr. Dave Wietelmann**
- **1 August, Sunday: Randy Jacobs & Gary Anderson**

© **AMERICAN RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE.** The American Red Cross will hold a blood drive at Grace on Monday, July 19th, from 12:00 to 6:00 PM. Volunteers are needed for shifts of 12:00 to 3:00 and 3:00 to 6:00 to work at donor registration, and to restock snacks and wipe down tables in the canteen area.



Please contact Joan Eckermann if you can help! (Cell: 419-350-4088; Work: 419-332-2081, ext. 245; Email: jeckermann@hotmail.com).

© **OPERATION OREO.** 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

© **PORTAL OF PRAYER DEVOTIONAL BOOKLETS.** New Portals of Prayer devotional booklets are now available. These booklets are published quarterly and are available without charge. See Nancy Pries for a copy.

© **ELMORE FOOD PANTRY.** The Grace Food Pantry item for July is 10.5 oz. cans of soup. The Elmore Food Pantry, which is hosted at Grace, is open on the third Friday and Saturday of each month, from 9:00 AM until noon. Anyone who wishes to drop off food items at the church should bring them to the church on Sunday or leave them inside the north door during the following hours when the church office door is open:

- **Monday and Wednesday: 4:30 to 5:30 PM**
- **Tuesday and Thursday: 6:30 to 7:30 PM**
- **Saturday: 9:00 to 10:00 AM**
- **Sunday: 9:30 to 10:00 AM**

© **SPECIAL BENEVOLENCE ACTIVITIES:**

- **Veterans Matter Noisy Offering.** The Noisy Offering that was collected during worship on the 20th of June raised a total of \$147.96 that will be contributed to Veterans Matter to support their program for homeless veterans.
- **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.
- **Millers Receipts.** Members of the Grace Family who shop at Miller’s 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*).

Our prayer: God, our strength and salvation; we praise and exalt you for your great act of deliverance through the death and resurrection of your Son.

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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