

The Grace Family Weekly Message

2 April 2021



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES AT GRACE LUTHERAN CHURCH

MAUNDY THURSDAY WORSHIP, with communion and the stripping of the altar, is this evening (April 1st), at 7:00 PM (*Worship is in the Grace parking lot*)

GOOD FRIDAY WORSHIP, a service of the nails, is Friday evening (April 2nd) at 7:00 PM (*Worship is in the Grace parking lot*).

EASTER VIGIL WORSHIP, a service of scripture and messages about God's deliverance of his people; this will be a virtual service available on Saturday (April 3rd) (*links to the service will be sent to all members*)

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP, a celebration of Jesus' resurrection, with communion, is Sunday (April 4th) at 10:00 AM (*Worship is in the Grace parking lot*)

Grace's **Weekly Messages** are distributed by email and regular mail to all members of the Grace Family to keep everyone informed about worship services, church activities and benevolence programs. To add someone to the distribution list, send their email or mailing address (*copies are mailed to those who do not have email*) to the Church Office (graceelc@gmail.com) (or mail it to: Grace Lutheran Church, 19225 W. Witty Road, Elmore OH 43416).

*This week's Lenten Bible study is the sixth in a series of studies about events in Jesus' ministry that are recorded in the Gospel of Mark. These studies are designed to help us better understand the **Kingdom of God** that Jesus introduced at the beginning of his ministry (see page 7 for an explanation of the Lenten Bible study series).*

A BIBLE STUDY ON JESUS' INSTITUTION OF THE SACRAMENT OF COMMUNION AND HIS PROMISE TO BE PRESENT WITH US IN THE SACRAMENT

Mark 14:22-26 (NIV)

²²*While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take it; this is my body."*

²³*Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it.*

²⁴*"This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many," he said to them. ²⁵*"Truly I tell you; I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."**

During our Maundy Thursday worship service this evening we will hear these words again as we receive communion and commemorate the last meal Jesus' had with his disciples before his death. Mark, Matthew, Luke and 1 Corinthians all have similar versions of what Jesus did and said to institute the sacrament of communion. While these words are familiar, it is still important to pause during this Holy Week to consider how significant those words and actions are.

During their Passover meal, Jesus took a loaf of bread and a cup of wine and **"gave thanks"** to God, the giver of all good gifts. When we celebrate communion in our worship, the giving of thanks, the consecration of the bread and wine by an ordained pastor, is a necessary prelude to our receiving those elements.

When Jesus offered the broken bread to the disciples, he announced, **"this is my body."** Those words unfortunately became a basis for church divisions. Roman Catholics believe that when the elements are consecrated, they actually become the body and blood of Christ (transubstantiation). Martin Luther adamantly resisted attempts to unify Lutherans with Swiss Protestants because they believed the bread and wine are only symbols of Jesus body and blood. Many Protestant denominations continue to teach that today. Luther insisted that **"this is my body"** must be understood to mean that Christ is truly and bodily present in the bread and blood of communion. For us, these words are Jesus' promise to be present with us when we receive communion.



The Last Supper, Charles Billich, 2010. We believe Jesus is truly present with us when we receive communion.

When Jesus took the cup, he announced, **"this is my blood of the covenant."** A covenant is an agreement. In the Old Testament, God and the Israelites made mutual promises in a covenant that was validated with the blood of animals (Exodus 24:8). Here the concept of covenant between God and His people takes a dramatic turn when Jesus announces that this new covenant will be validated with the blood of God's own Son.

The reason Jesus' blood was shed comes out as his words continued, **"which is poured out for many."** Matthew's version adds, **"for the forgiveness of sins"** (Mt 26:28). We are the **"many,"** Jesus sacrificed his body and shed his blood so human sin could be forgiven. Our receiving the consecrated bread and wine of communion is a means of receiving God's gift of grace—the forgiveness of sins. When we receive communion during the Maundy Thursday service, or on Easter morning or at any worship service, we are receiving God's ultimate gift, the forgiveness of sin.

Jesus, knowing that his death was near, concluded their meal with a promise that the next meal they would share is “**when I drink it new in the Kingdom of God.**” It is Jesus’ promise of the coming of the Kingdom of God in the fullness of eternal life. But Jesus had to drink the cup of suffering before that day could be possible.

WEEKLY NEWS AND EVENTS AT GRACE

- © **HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES AT GRACE.** Grace is offering a full series of Holy Week worship services that include Maundy Thursday worship with communion (April 1st, at 7:00 PM), a Good Friday service of the nails (April 2nd at 7:00 PM, a virtual Easter Vigil service (April 3rd, with links to be sent) and an Easter Sunday celebration of the resurrection, with communion (April 4th at 10:00). The Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter services will be outdoor services taking



place in the church parking lot. Pastor Jaci and Church Musicians Bobbie Bean, Joan Eckermann and Rachel Beeler will lead the services. **WE LOOK FORWARD TO WELCOMING ALL MEMBERS OF THE GRACE FAMILY TO OUR HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES! VISITORS ARE ESPECIALLY WELCOME!**

- **Attendance and Offerings Last Sunday.** 64 persons attended worship last Sunday. Offering totals will be available next week. Thank you to all who attend worship and contribute their much-appreciated offerings.
- **Offering Envelope Instructions.** The offering envelopes distributed to Grace households for March and April include envelopes for regular weekly offerings as well envelopes labeled LENTEN OFFERING and special envelopes for MAUNDY THURSDAY, GOOD FRIDAY and EASTER. Offerings enclosed in LENTEN OFFERING, MAUNDY THURSDAY and GOOD FRIDAY envelopes will be credited to the **ELCA Good Gifts Fruit-Tree Farm project**, the Lenten Special Offering for this year. Offerings in the regular and EASTER envelopes will be credited as regular offerings. Checks with special designations are, of course, credited to that purpose.

- © **VERA HILLE, 1924-2021.** The Grace church family mourns the loss of its oldest member, Vera Hille, who passed away at her home on Tuesday, the 30th of March, at the age of 96. Visitation will be on Monday, the 5th of April, from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM, at Crosser Funeral Home (19550 W. State Route 51). The funeral service will take place in the Grace sanctuary on Tuesday, the 6th of April, at 10:00 AM. Seating in the sanctuary for the funeral service will be reserved for family members and close friends and will be socially distanced. The public is invited to attend and hear the service in the Grace parking lot where the service will be



Vera Hille at her 96th birthday celebration in May 2020.

broadcast on FM 94.1. Vera was a life-long member at Grace who was confirmed in April 1938. We thank God for Vera's presence with us for so many years and share the grief of all who mourn.

- © **PRAYER CONCERNS.** Please keep the following persons in your prayers:

The Family of Vera Hille, The Family of Jim Slotterbeck, The Family of Ron Schnitker.

Roseann Michel, Karen Schlievert, Jeannette Young, Ora Bipman, Sean, Bethany Collier, Delbert Weng, Earlene and Dan Van Etten, Scott Taylor, Brian Richardson, Jenny Lehman, Jody Angelone, Ruth Avers, Ron Dangler, Shirley

Buhrow 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.



- © **Confirmation.** Being confirmed is a significant event in the life of young Lutheran church members. Confirmation classes are offered for youth in the seventh and eighth grades. After they are confirmed, they transition from being “baptized members” to “confirmed members.” Confirmation is celebrated with a special affirmation of baptism liturgy that takes place during worship. This spring Grace will have two confirmation services. Lillian Myers will be confirmed on the 2nd of May. Lillian actually completed her confirmation studies in 2020 but her confirmation was delayed because of the covid-pandemic situation. Brady Buhrow is completing his confirmation experience at Grace this spring and will be confirmed on Pentecost Sunday, the 23rd of May. Eve Jackson has been taking confirmation classes at Solomon Lutheran Church in Woodville but as a baptized member at Grace, she will also be confirmed at Grace on the 23rd of May.
- © **Deacon Schedule.** Deacons scheduled to serve in upcoming worship services are:
- **1 April, Thursday (Maundy Thursday): Mark & Jennifer Haar**
 - **2 April, Friday (Good Friday): Randy Jacobs & Gary Anderson**
 - **4 April, Easter Sunday: Deb & Jeff Boos; Jean & Merlyn Weng**
 - **11 April, Sunday: Rachel Beeler & Joan Eckermann**
- © **Bell Tower Restoration.** The Grace Board of Property and Council have now approved a proposal from Chime Master Bell Systems to restore Grace's Bell Tower to its original operating condition at a cost of \$5,100. Since this is over the

Constitutional limit of \$5,000, the Council has called for a Congregational Meeting to take place after worship on the 18th of April to consider this proposal. The Grace bell tower was originally erected near the sanctuary in 1980 and was subsequently moved to its present location in 2001 when the Fellowship Hall and educational rooms were built. The bell played memorable roles in many Grace worship services but in 2016 it was disabled by lightning and has not functioned since then. Original estimates for restoration were unacceptably high and no action was taken until now. Several members have expressed their desires to restore the bell and the new bid of \$5,100 appears to be a reasonable answer to those aspirations; funding is available from the Memorial Fund. We will provide more information about this project as the meeting date approaches. Until then, anyone with questions or comments should contact Steve Simkus or Gary Anderson.

- © **Call for Congregational Meeting.** There will be a Congregational Meeting in the Grace parking lot immediately after worship on Sunday, 18 April. The purpose of the meeting is to consider the recommendations of the Grace Council and Board of Property to approve the bid of Chime Masters to restore the bell tower (see above).

- © **Church Meetings.**

- **Council.** Will meet on 8 April at 7:00 PM (via Zoom).
- **Witness and Mission.** Will meet on 13 April at 4:00 PM.
- **Property.** Will meet in the church on 15 April at 5:30 PM.
- **Worship.** Will meet (via Zoom) on 15 April at 7:00 PM.
- **Congregational Life.** Will meet on 22 April at 7:00 PM (via Zoom).

- © **Call Committee.** The Grace Call Committee's most recent meeting was a virtual (Zoom) meeting on the 25th of February, when it began a final review of Grace's MSP before it is forwarded to the Grace Council.

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

Anyone wishing to make a donation 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

- © **Lenten Special Offering Project.** The Board of Witness and Mission selected the ELCA Good Gifts Fruit-Tree Farm as Grace's special Lenten offering project for 2021. Fruit tree seedlings can be gifted for \$10 each, when donations total \$150 they will buy an entire fruit tree farm. Based on past Lenten contributions the Board set a goal of raising \$900 to donate six fruit tree farms but there have already been enough contributions to buy more than ten fruit tree farms. The Lenten Special Offering program will continue through Good Friday of this week. Members can still make Lenten Special Offerings when they attend this week's Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services, or they can donate Lenten Special Offerings along with their

regular weekly offering (*use a LENTEN SPECIAL OFFERING envelope or write "Lenten Offering" on the memo line of Lenten Offering checks*).

© **ELMORE FOOD PANTRY.** The Grace Food Pantry item for April is any size package of toilet paper. 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 (*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**

© **REGULAR BENEVOLENCE ACTIVITIES:**

- **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*).
- **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: God of Love, we cannot adequate thank you for the unfathomable gift of forgiveness you gave us through the sacrifice 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

NOTES ON GRACE'S 2021 LENTEN BIBLE STUDY

Ash Wednesday, February 17th, marked the beginning of 40 days of Lent in 2021. The six weeks that end with the Easter Vigil on the 3rd of April have special meaning for Christians everywhere. This year, covid pandemic restrictions prevented the Grace family from having traditional soup suppers and Lenten Bible studies. In place of those group studies, **Grace's Weekly Message** Lenten meditations are short Bible studies designed to help us better understand the Kingdom of God that Jesus introduced when he began his ministry.

According to Mark (*Mark 1:15, also Matthew 4:17*), Jesus' first recorded words after he returned from his wilderness trial were, "**the Kingdom of God has come near** (*is approaching*), **repent** (*change your ways*) **and believe** (*have faith in*) **the good news** (*Gospel, God's Word about His grace and mercy*).\" These Lenten studies look at Mark's accounts of transformative events in Jesus' ministry. Those events give us clues about the Kingdom of God that Jesus brought "**near**." Each study will also ask what being a child of God in the Kingdom means for us. This series will lead us from Ash Wednesday to the proclamation we look forward to hearing during the Easter Vigil, "**Alleluia, Christ is Risen!**"

The events and scriptures featured in this year's Lenten study are:

18 February. **Introducing the Kingdom of God**, Mark 1:12-15

25 February. **Feeding the Five Thousand**, Mark 6:30-44

4 March. **The Transfiguration**, Mark 9:2-10

11 March. **The Little Children and Jesus**, Mark 10:13-16

18 March. **Jesus Enters Jerusalem**, Mark 11:1-10

25 March. **The Greatest Commandment**, Mark 12:28-34

1 April (Maundy Thursday). **The Last Supper**, Mark 14:12-26

You may want to read these scriptures in advance to prepare your own thoughts about the Kingdom of God that Jesus introduced to us.