



Vestry Voices

The Church Family Newsletter

First Congregational
Church of Clinton

February 2025

Editor
Charles T. Tamminen

Torah and Nomos

Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not;
for if a law had been given which could make alive,
then righteousness would indeed be by the law

Galatians 3:21 (RSV)



Rev. Gary Kiontke



Even today, in some evangelical circles, “the law” is misunderstood and not being applied or practiced as God intended. The King James Version translates the Greek word *nomos* as “law” all 197 times it occurs in the Gospels and New Testament; and it translates the Hebrew word *torah* as “law” all 219 times it occurs in the Pentateuch, Prophets and Poetry.

Webster’s Dictionary gives ten shades of meaning to the English word “law.” It is summed up by the primary meaning: all the rules of conduct established and enforced by the authority, legislation, or custom of a given community.

The root word for *torah* is *yarah*, a verb which, in one sense, means to shoot or throw. It is most commonly used with shooting an arrow straight and true with a bow, the deadliest weapon of its day. For this reason, in another sense, it means to teach what is straight and true. *Torah* is a noun derived from the second sense of the verb *yarah*. It means the subject of what is taught, or teaching or instruction. In the books of Moses, *torah* is the instruction that God, in His love, gave to Moses on Mt. Sinai as to how to have a right relationship with Him and with people. The book of Deuteronomy shows *torah* as history, regulations and their interpretations, and exhortations.

Torah is related to Yahweh’s Covenant in the sense that it is His authoritative revelation of the details of what He expects of His people under His Covenant. He gives priests the responsibility of instructing His people how to live by *torah*. But in the wisdom literature, especially in Proverbs, *torah* is the application of Deuteronomic *torah* in the everyday lives of all God’s people.

It is no accident that the longest Psalm was written by a priest and, in addition to *torah*, uses seven words related to it that to-

gether describe God’s Covenant requirements:

- ayduth* – testimonies,
- piqqudim* – precepts,
- khuyqim* – statutes,
- mitswah* – commandments,
- mishpatim* – ordinances,
- dabar* – word,
- imrah* – promise.

From the above, it is clear that *torah* (“law”) goes beyond the American understanding of law since its establishment in the late eighteenth century.

When the rabbis translated Scripture from Hebrew into Greek in the late second to third century before the Savior was born in Bethlehem (hereafter abbreviated BC), because more than half of the Jews spoke only Greek, they chose the Greek word *nomos* for *torah*. It is useful to look into what *nomos* meant at that time for Greek speaking people:

- Its original meaning was “that which is proper,” often in light of (Greek) religion. It covered both cosmic (from the gods) and a natural (moral for people) “law.” This understanding is not too far from the Scriptural sense of *torah*.
- In the fifth century BC, the Greeks changed the meaning of *nomos* to primarily mean what was written in the laws made by people. The Stoics were at the forefront of this change.
- However, the rabbis used *nomos* in the sense of something rooted in God’s Covenant with Israel that reflected His authoritative will for His people. In this, they chose the longer-standing original meaning of *nomos* over the more recent philosophical revision of its meaning.

In the final days of the northern kingdom of Israel, in the late eighth century BC, God sent prophets to urge His people to re-

(continued on page 2 ...)

Inside this issue:

Torah and Nomos	1
Sundays in February	2
Missions Report	2
Movie Night	4
February 2025 Calendar of Events	5



Torah and Nomos (... continued from page #1)

pent. Their inspired messages of warning were based on the *torah* God gave to Moses. Their continuance in the land they occupied as a result of His word to Abraham depended on their keeping His Covenant (Genesis 15:12-21). A chapter on blessings and curses comes near the end of Deuteronomy. It starts with Yahweh's Covenant blessings for continued obedience to *torah* (Deuteronomy 28:1-14). It concludes with many curses if they do not return to obedience to *torah*, and ends with removal from the land for continued disobedience (Deuteronomy 28:15-68). Isaiah foretold the birth of a child with four God-like qualities who would rule from David's throne forever (9:2-7). Later he told of a suffering servant who would pour out his life for the sins of his people, but he would see the light of life (52:13-53:12). Shortly after Judah went to captivity in Babylon, in the late sixth century BC, Jeremiah was inspired to write about the shortcoming of *torah*, because people could not obey it in their own strength. So, Yahweh would establish a New Covenant in which He, Himself, would write *torah* on the hearts of His people (31:31-34). Soon after this, Ezekiel was inspired by Yahweh to write that He would give His people a new heart and put His Spirit in them so they would keep His ordinances (*mishpatim*) and their Covenant relationship with Him would be fully restored.

After Pentecost, it became clear to the early Church fathers that these three prophecies about the God-with-us child, a new Covenant, and God's Spirit living in His people to fulfill *torah*, were fulfilled in the Savior-King, Jesus Christ. Put together they predicted the birth, life, death and resurrection, ascension to the right hand of God on His Throne, and sending of the Holy Spirit by Jesus Christ.

Jesus Himself said He came to fulfill the *nomos*, and all who do and teach *nomos* will be called great in the Kingdom (Matthew 5:17-19). James gives the best application of what happens to people who live by the faith of the One who fulfilled *nomos*: anyone who looks steadily at the perfect law (*nomos*) of freedom and keeps to it – not listening and forgetting, but putting it into practice – will be blessed in every undertaking (James 1:25, NJB).

The last word is this: God wants all His people to apply all the moral teachings of His "law" (or *torah*) given through Moses. And we can all do this by living IN Jesus Christ, who fulfilled *nomos*, by humble, child-like obedient faith IN Him (Romans 1:16-17). ~VV~

Sundays in February

We will have Communion on February 2 and 16.

Here are the details on the sermon texts and themes for each of the worship services. (The texts in Joshua may be abridged and the themes are subject to change with further study of the passages.):

Date	Scripture	Theme
February 2	Joshua 6:1-25; Psalm 145:17-21	The faith of a non-Israelite saves her family from destruction
February 9	Joshua 7:1-26; Psalm 106:34-36	One man's sin can harm many people in his community
February 16	Joshua 8:1-29; Psalm 78:51-55	God fights for His faithfully obedient people
February 23	Joshua 9:1-27; Psalm 32:5-8	Always consult God before making a decision



Missions Report

by Sally Camara

On the next two pages are the yearly Impact report from WARM and a thank you note from the director for the donation from FCC.

Take a minute to look over the report and see the various ways your giving is impacting refugees in the Worcester area. Good things are happening!

(Photo by Qasim Mirzaie; pexels.com)

(continued on pages 3 & 4 ...)

Missions Report (... continued from page #2)



58 SUMMER SOCCER SCHOOL

25 TEEN ART CLASS

19 HOMEWORK HELP

90 FRIDAY SOCCER

192 REFUGEE YOUTH SERVED

ENGLISH LEARNING CLASSES with childcare

146 STUDENTS

220 CLASSES

14,149 HOURS OF VOLUNTEER TIME

PREGNANT MOM & BABY CARE

IN HOSPITAL DOULA SUPPORT, PRE- AND POST-NATAL CARE FOR

7 MOMS & BABIES

3 HOPE GROUPS for mental health

26 WOMEN SERVED

1127 REFUGEES SERVED

FROM OVER **24 COUNTRIES**

35 PARTNERSHIPS WITH AREA AGENCIES

15 APARTMENTS SET UP

75 REFUGEES SETTLED IN THEIR NEW HOMES

1166 TRAINEES TO DATE FROM 116 CHURCHES

33 EVENTS FOR REFUGEES!

81 EVENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS!

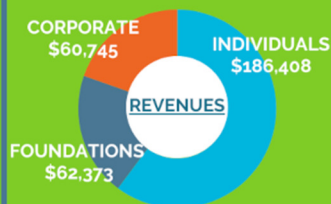
321 ACTIVE VOLUNTEERS

33 STUDENT DRIVERS LICENSED

91 REFUGEE FAMILIES BEFRIENDED

BUILDING A BRIDGE BETWEEN THE CHURCH AND OUR CITY'S REFUGEES

www.warmwelcoming.org
est 2016



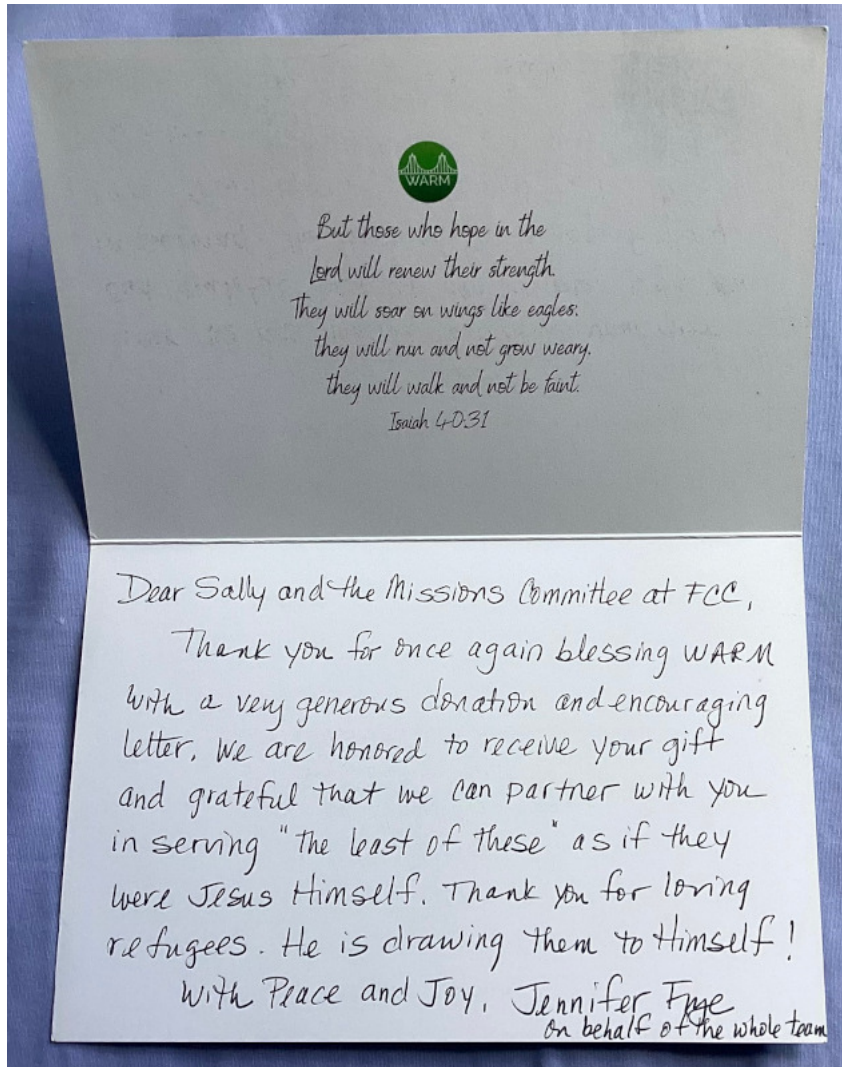
\$ 309,526
TOTAL REVENUES

\$ 290,036
TOTAL EXPENSES



Fiscal year July '23 to June '24

Missions Report (... continued from page #3)



As all of you are aware, many changes have taken place for immigrants since the Trump administration came into office.

For those who aren't aware, refugees are completely legal and vetted. Many have waited years to be approved for placement in a safe country and begin a new life.

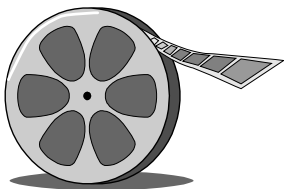
The Trump administration immediately suspended all incoming refugees for at least the next 90 days pending review. Even those who already had flights scheduled have been cancelled. One can only imagine the great disappointment for them and in some cases, family they would have been reunited with.

From my research, SIV (special immigrant visas) thankfully, are still being processed. These are for people from Afghanistan and Iraq who worked with our military, and face danger and threats to their lives because of it. Also, they were promised safety from our government if they worked with us. Among them are interpreters, helicopter pilots, and drivers.

Please be in prayer for those refugees awaiting placement, for our government and the decisions being made, for resettlement agencies, and for refugee ministries like WARM.

May the church always "welcome the stranger" as Jesus taught us. ~VV~

Movie Night Friday, February 21 at 7:00 PM



We show a movie once each month, in Fellowship Hall, usually on the fourth Friday (**third Friday this month**). The movies shown in the past have covered a range of genres, and were usually thought provoking.

We are able to show these movies based on the church's CVLI® license. However, this license does not allow us to advertise or publicize the names of these movies to the general public, and they are always free of charge.

We usually have free snacks available, and you are also welcome to bring your own meal, if you wish.

So, please join us for a night out at the movies!





FEBRUARY 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
						1
2 Communion Sunday (Note #1)	3	4	5 (††)	6 (**)	7	8
9 FCC Worship; Coffee Hour after Worship (Note #2)	10	11	12 (††)	13 (**)	14	15
16 Communion Sunday (Note #3)	17	18	19 (††)	20 (**)	21 Movie Night (Note #4)	22
23 FCC Worship; Coffee Hour after Worship (Note #5)	24 March "Vestry Voices" Articles Due (Note #6)	25	26 (††)	27 (**)	28	

Calendar Notes:

- #1) 2/2 — Communion Sunday: **10:27 AM.**
 - #2) 2/9 — FCC Worship: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Coffee Hour after Worship.
 - #3) 2/16 — Communion Sunday: **10:27 AM.**
 - #4) 2/21 — Movie Night — in Fellowship Hall: **7:00 PM.**
 - #5) 2/23 — FCC Worship: **10:27 AM. ALSO:** Coffee Hour after Worship.
 - #6) 2/24 — Articles are due for the March issue of "Vestry Voices" (for assembly/mail-out on February 25).
- (††)** Wednesday Bible Study: **11:00 AM** (in FCC Parlor).
- (**)** Thursday afternoon prayer: **3:00 PM** (in FCC Parlor).

