



Weekly Booster

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Facebook Contributors

Pastor Oliver Fabros,

Craig Harris, Jeff Hiser

Sunday Praise Team

Terry Stafford, Linda Haldane,

Margaret Brady, Deb Finlay,

Jeff Hiser, Pastor Oliver

*Our Vision: **Growing** as
disciples of Jesus while
connecting with others and
serving our community.*



The Ten Plagues: When the God of Heaven Dismantled the Gods of Egypt

When we read Exodus 7–12, it's tempting to understand the ten plagues as a spectacular but disconnected series of miracles: a divine light show meant to scare Pharaoh into submission so that the people of Israel could walk away free from their Egyptian slavery. But Scripture gives us a deeper key to understanding them. In Exodus 12:12, God says plainly: "I will bring judgment on all the gods of Egypt. I am the Lord."

The Plagues as a Theological Battle

The ten plagues we read about in Exodus 7-12 were not random. Each one was a direct, surgical strike against a specific Egyptian deity, exposing that god as powerless before the true and living God of creation—the One who made and still controls all things. This matters for us today because the world is still full of false "gods" in the form of systems, ideologies, and powers that demand our worship and devotion. The plagues remind us that not one of them can stand before the very Lord of the universe, the same God who is the Lord of every life on the earth.

When Moses and Aaron—at ages 80 and 83, respectively—stood before Pharaoh demanding freedom for the Israelites (Ex 5:1; 7:16; 8:1; 9:1; 10:3) they weren't just asking for a diplomatic favor. Rather, they were setting off a confrontation between the God of Israel and the entire religious and political order of Egypt.

Continued on page 2

*“When you are asked if you
can do a job, tell'em
Certainly I can! Then get
busy and find out how to do
it. Theodore Roosevelt*

*“By working faithfully eight
hours a day, you may
eventually get to be boss and
work 12 hours a day.”
Robert Frost*

Reminders

October 18th

Sunday Service 9:00 a.m.
PK-6 S.S.– after children's message
Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost
Men's Breakfast – 8:00 a.m.

October 21st

Mat Making – 1:00 p.m.
Praise Team – 4:00 p.m.
Bell Choir – 4:30 p.m.
Chancel Choir – 5:30 p.m.

Worship Assistant is
needed each Sunday,
Sign up at the Welcome Center

Meals-On-Wheels Deliveries
Sign up at the Welcome Counter

After service each week, join us in
Fellowship Hall for treats, coffee,
and fellowship.

Plagues - continued from page 1.

Exodus 7–10 records nine of the ten plagues, each one a calculated blow against a civilization that believed its gods controlled the Nile, the sky, the sun, and the harvest. The sequence begins in Exodus 7, when Moses' staff becomes a snake and swallows the staffs of Pharaoh's magicians. This is just a small preview of what is to come. Then the plagues themselves unfold.

The editors of the *NIV Study Bible* describe the plagues in this manner:

“The first nine plagues can be divided into three groups of three plagues each: 7:14—8:19; 8:20—9:12; 9:13—10:29. The first plague in each group (the first, the fourth, and the seventh) is introduced as a warning delivered to the pharaoh in the morning as he went out to the Nile (7:15; 8:20; 9:13). Each of the three groups of plagues seems to be directed against one or more of the chief gods of Egypt...Some interpreters believe that the first nine plagues may have been a series of unprecedented intensifications of events that were part of the Egyptian experience, events that in their more usual form did not have anything like the catastrophic effects of the disasters God brought on Egypt in order to deliver the Israelites from Egyptian imperial bondage.”

Let's take a look at each one of these terrifying and destructive plagues.

1. Blood (*Exodus 7:14–25*)

The Nile river was sacred to Egypt, worshiped in part through the god **Hapi**, the god of the river's flooding and fertility. When the Nile turned to blood, the very source of Egypt's life and abundance became a symbol of death.

The editors of the *NIV Study Bible* describe this first plague in this manner: “The first plague may have resulted from an unparalleled quantity of red sediment being washed down from Ethiopia, during the annual flooding of the Nile in late summer and early fall, causing the water of Egypt's lifeline to become as red as blood” and fulfilling God's promise through Moses and Aaron. In this first plague, God struck at the very heart of Egypt's economic and spiritual security.

Continued on page 6

TWENTY-FIRST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST,
OCTOBER 18, 2026



Volunteers Needed



LAST PERSON LEAVING
PLEASE TURN OUT LIGHTS
AND LOCK DOORS

First United Methodist Church

**Please wear your
name tag on
Sunday mornings**



Church Ad Board Members

Bob Lynn - Chair
Mary Peterson - Secretary
Darlene Howard - At-Large
Roger Jones - Trustee
Dave Christensen - SPRC
Dan Weiss -
Finance/Stewardship
Dave Lashier - Treasurer
Craig Harris - Lay Member to
Annual Conference
Connie Anderson - Memorials
Linda Haldane - Membership
Oliver Fabros - Pastor

Church Office Hours

**** Children & Jr.-Sr. High
Sunday School –
PK-6 & Jr/Sr High
After Children's Message**

Wednesday

**Praise Team – 4:00 p.m.
Bell Choir – 4:30 p.m.
Chancel Choir – 5:30 p.m.**

The front door to the church
will be locked during office
hours. Please ring the
doorbell to be let into the
church.

Monday

9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

Tuesday

9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

**Wednesday
Office Closed
Mat Making
1:00**

Thursday

9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

Friday

9:00-11:00
12:00-3:00

Please continue to call in
advance if you need to
enter the church to make
sure someone is in the
office. If you reach the
answering machine,
please leave your name,
number, and a brief
message, and your call
will be returned. Calls
after 2:00 p.m. may be
returned on the next
business day.



What was all flesh
asked to do before the
Lord according to the
book of Zechariah?

- a) be silent
- b) cry out loud
- c) bring sacrifices
- d) flee

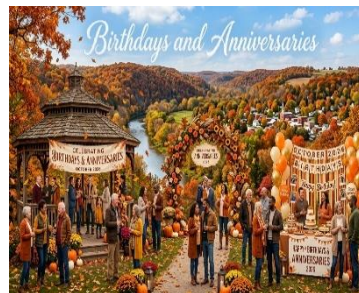
According to Obadiah, where
shall the Saviors go up to, to
rule Mount Esau?

- a) Mount Nebo
- b) Mount Hor
- c) Mount Zion
- d) Mount Ararat

How many letters of the
Apostle John are there in the
Bible??

- a) 1
- b) 2
- c) 3
- d) none

**Check page 4 for answers from
the previous week.**



18th – Dennis & Kathy Bayless
19th – Bennett Blane, Brian Blank
20th – Andrea Robison Kelso, Paige Wiebold, Dennis &
Sandra Bailey
21st – Brielle Blank, Rita Rorebeck
22nd – Al & LuAnn Armstrong
23rd – Justin Brink
24th – Penelope Jones

****See a wrong birthday or anniversary, or need one added? Please call the
office or send an email to office@shen.church**

**Shenandoah First United
Methodist Church**

200 Church St.
Shenandoah, IA 51601

Phone 712-246-2081

Church E-mail
office@shen.church

Same address – a new look at
<https://shen.church>



<https://shenchurch.onechurchsoftware.com/>



United Methodist Church,
Shenandoah, IA

<https://www.facebook.com/methodist.church.shenandoah>



Services are now on our YouTube
channel only.

<https://www.youtube.com/@shen.church8192/streams>

***Prelude/Postlude/Accompanist: Terry Stafford**

Call to Worship

Leader: The Sower still scatters the seed of God's Word.

People: Make our hearts good soil, O God.

L: Christ calls us to grow beyond where we are today.

P: Nurture us toward maturity in faith and love.

L: We are given gifts not only for ourselves, but for building up the body.

P: Teach us to grow together and help others grow.

L: Come, people of God. Let us receive what gives life.

P: Let us worship the God who makes all things grow.

"Being is Believing"

Scripture Reading: Matthew 22:15-22, Isaiah 45:1-7

Songs

For The Beauty of the Earth #92

Still #3134

Make Me a Servant #2176

Pass It On #572

Last Week's Attendance

In-Person Worship – 69 Online Worship – 1

Our Vision:

"Growing as disciples of Jesus while connecting with others and serving our community."

Answers for October 11th are b) Christ a) Scale c) 98 yrs old

Quiz hints – Q1) Zechariah Q2) Obadiah Q3) 3 John



October 2026

Whole Kernel Corn, Microwave popcorn, Hot Chocolate Packets, Muffin, Cake, and Brownie Mixes, Spices (any type), Wide Egg Noodles, Pumpkin, Sweet Potatoes, Spinach, Sauerkraut, Taco Shells, Taco Seasoning, Bar or Liquid Soap, Toilet Paper.

There are times when people who use the Food Pantry come to the pantry on foot. They are then forced to walk home carrying, pushing, or pulling several pounds of food. Southwest Iowa Transit, for a very reasonable fee of \$5.00, will take individuals home with their food items. If you are interested in helping pay for these fees, simply seal your cash (whatever you would like to give) in a plain envelope and add it to your donated food items.

Thank you to everyone who continues to support the Community Food Pantry. We exist totally on donations; we couldn't assist those in need without your help!

If you or anyone who would be interested in volunteering at the Food Pantry, please contact Jeannine K. Liljedahl at 712-215-288.



This is Pastor Appreciation Month. Send a card, make a visit, or make a phone call and let Pastor Oliver know how much he means to you and to the church!



Plagues - continued from page 2.

2. Frogs (*Exodus 8:1–15*)

Frogs were associated with **Heqet**, a goddess of fertility and childbirth, often depicted with a frog's head. In this case, instead of frogs signaling blessing and fruitfulness, they became an overwhelming plague of disgust and disorder, mocking the very essence of a goddess who was supposed to grant order to life.

It's after this plague that we address the consistent hardening of Pharaoh's heart. Here Pharaoh pleads with Moses for relief from the invasion of the frogs, "But when Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he hardened his heart and would not listen to Moses and Aaron, just as the Lord had said" (8:15). In the earliest plagues, the hardening is entirely Pharaoh's own doing. He sees relief and reneges on his word. Only after this repeated pattern does the text say God hardens him (9:12). That sequence matters: it suggests God's hardening functions less as an arbitrary override of a neutral will and more as a judicial response, confirming Pharaoh in the direction he had already, and repeatedly, chosen for himself.

3. Gnats (*Exodus 8:16–19*)

Here even Pharaoh's magicians confess, "This is the finger of God" (8:19). Some scholars connect this plague to **Geb**, the god of the earth, since the dust itself became the source of judgment. Egypt's priests, who prided themselves on ritual purity, were in this plague overrun by a form of uncleanness they could not stop. They admitted as much in the statement above, recorded so that we today could reflect on their absolute helpless despair.

4. Flies (*Exodus 8:20–32*)

This plague was possibly connected to **Khepri**, the scarab-beetle god of creation and rebirth. These swarms of flies infested every stable and home, bringing painful bites to both people and livestock and intensifying the suffering of the people of Egypt.

Notably, in this plague God begins to distinguish Israel in Goshen from Egypt: "But on that day I will deal differently with the land of Goshen, where my people live; no swarms of flies will be there, so that you will know that I, the Lord, am in this land. I will make a distinction between my people and your people. This sign will occur tomorrow" (8:22–23). This was a clear declaration from God that the plague of flies was not a simply natural disaster, but the result of the action of the discriminating hand of the Lord Yahweh, the God of Israel who intentionally acts to protect his people.

5. Livestock Disease (*Exodus 9:1–7*)

This plague struck at gods like **Hathor** (the cow goddess) and **Apis** (the sacred bull), which in Egyptian culture were symbols of strength, fertility, and divine protection. When Egypt's cattle died while Israel's remained untouched, it declared that Yahweh, not Hathor or Apis, governs life and death.

Here the *NIV Study Bible* editors declare, “Thus Egyptian religion is again rebuked and ridiculed.”

6. Boils (*Exodus 9:8–12*)

This plague likely confronted **Sekhmet** and **Imhotep**, Egyptian deities associated with healing and medicine. The priest-physicians of Egypt, covered in their own painful, festering boils, could not even stand before Pharaoh (9:11). The Egyptian gods of healing could not heal.

7. Hail (*Exodus 9:13–35*)

Here God directly confronts the Pharaoh of Egypt with these words:

Then the Lord said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the Lord, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go. Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now (Ex 9:13–18).

And God kept his promise to the defiant Pharaoh. This terrifying and destructive plague was a direct assault on **Nut** (the sky goddess) and **Shu** (god of the air), as well as **Seth**, the storm god. Lightning mingled with hail in a way that defied nature itself—showing that control over the sky and storms belong to the Lord, not to Egypt’s pantheon.

8. Locusts (*Exodus 10:1–20*)

This plague targeted agricultural deities like **Senehem**, protector of crops, and even Pharaoh himself, who was believed to have divine control over the land’s fertility. The locusts devoured everything the hail had left, stripping Egypt of its remaining wealth and security. With this plague, the devastation of the people of Egypt was nearly complete.

9. Darkness (*Exodus 10:21–29*)

Perhaps the most theologically loaded plague, this was a frontal assault on **Ra**, the supreme sun god of Egypt, and on Pharaoh himself, who was considered Ra’s son and the earthly incarnation of that god. Three days of thick darkness, “darkness that can be felt” (10:21), proclaimed that no supposed Egyptian god controlled the sun or ruled the sky—only the Lord of heaven and earth did.

Imagine the psychological toll this reality would have taken on a populace who to this point had looked to the sun god Ra as the always-reliable source of the end of the previous plagues. Three days of relenting blackness stood in the face of a cultural deity that was relied upon for the light of day. Having no idea if or when the darkness was going to end, the families of Egypt must have been terrified.

10. Death of the Firstborn (*Exodus 11:1–10; 12:29–30*)

The final plague struck at Pharaoh's own divine claim, since the Pharaoh's firstborn son was regarded as a god-in-waiting. And it is this plague that finally convinced the Pharaoh to relinquish his control over the people of Israel and let them go.

On this plague the *NIV Study Bible* editors comment, "This is the ultimate disaster, since all the plans and dreams of a father were bound up in his firstborn son, who received a double share of the family estate when the father died...Moreover, judgment on the firstborn represented judgment on the entire community."

Read simply as disasters, the plagues themselves are alarming. Read in context, they're something closer to a systematic dismantling of Egyptian theology. Egypt's gods claimed authority over the river, the sky, fertility, cattle, and the sun. One by one, God struck exactly those domains, showing that none of them could protect their worshipers or even themselves.

The narrative makes the purpose explicit: God tells Moses the plagues happen "so that you may know there is no one like the Lord our God" (8:10), and so that Pharaoh and Egypt, and all who would hear of these plagues over the centuries, would know God's name and learn about his power and authority.

There's also a rescue story underneath the confrontation. Each plague draws a widening distinction between Egypt and Goshen—flies, disease, and hail spare the Israelites, making clear that this isn't random catastrophe but targeted judgment paired with targeted protection. And there's an exodus story: a nation enslaved for generations is being extracted from the most powerful empire of its day, one plague at a time, until Pharaoh has no choice but to let them go.

What This Means for Us Today

The ten plagues that God brought to Egypt are not merely ancient history; rather, they reveal something timeless about how God relates to the powers of this world. Every culture, whether ancient or modern, constructs its own pantheon of "gods": money, status, technology, government, ideology, self. These false powers promise security, fertility, health, and control, just as Egypt's gods did. And just like Egypt's gods, they are always ultimately exposed as powerless before the sovereignty of the living God.

Paul echoes this same truth in Colossians 2:15, where he says that through the cross, Christ "disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross." The

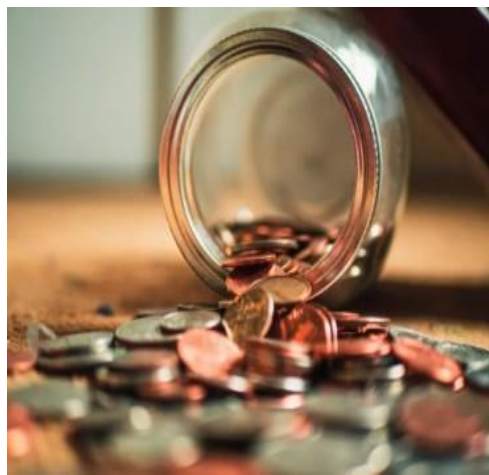
plagues of Exodus and the cross of Christ tell the same story from different chapters of redemptive history: God does not merely coexist with the false powers of this world; he conquers them.

This should give believers immense confidence. Whatever “Egypt” looms large in our lives; whatever cultural idol, addiction, fear, or false security has enslaved us, it is not ultimately in control over who we are. Our destinies are not shaped by these things. Rather, the Lord who turned the Nile to blood and darkened the sun over Egypt is the same Lord who reigns today. Our task is to recognize these gods and entities as false and to trust the God who delivers his people out of bondage, through the blood of Jesus, the true Passover Lamb, and into ultimate and eternal freedom.

As you reflect on the plagues, consider what “gods” in your own life need to be exposed as powerless? Are you able to see them for what they are: false, hollow entities that only break their promises?

How are you, today, trusting the One true God who alone holds overwhelming authority and power over every false idol of this world?

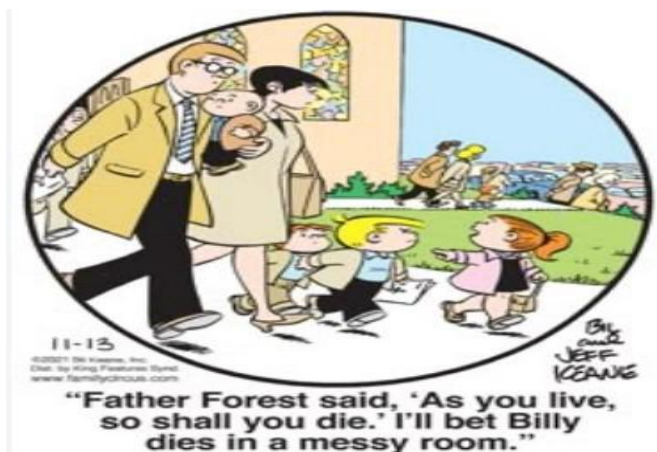
Adapted from the NIV Weekly Blog. All Rights Reserved. 501 Nelson Place, Nashville, TN 37214, USA, October 12, 2026.



October Noisy Offering

This month's Noisy Offering will support our local Hispanic Center in Wesley Hall. Last week, we handed out envelopes and passed the buckets, which caused a bit of confusion—so we want to clear that up! All donations from both the envelopes and the buckets go to the exact same place: the Hispanic Center.

To keep things simple moving forward, our kids will only pass the buckets. You can drop in your loose change, cash, or check directly into the bucket!





How Encouraging Are You?

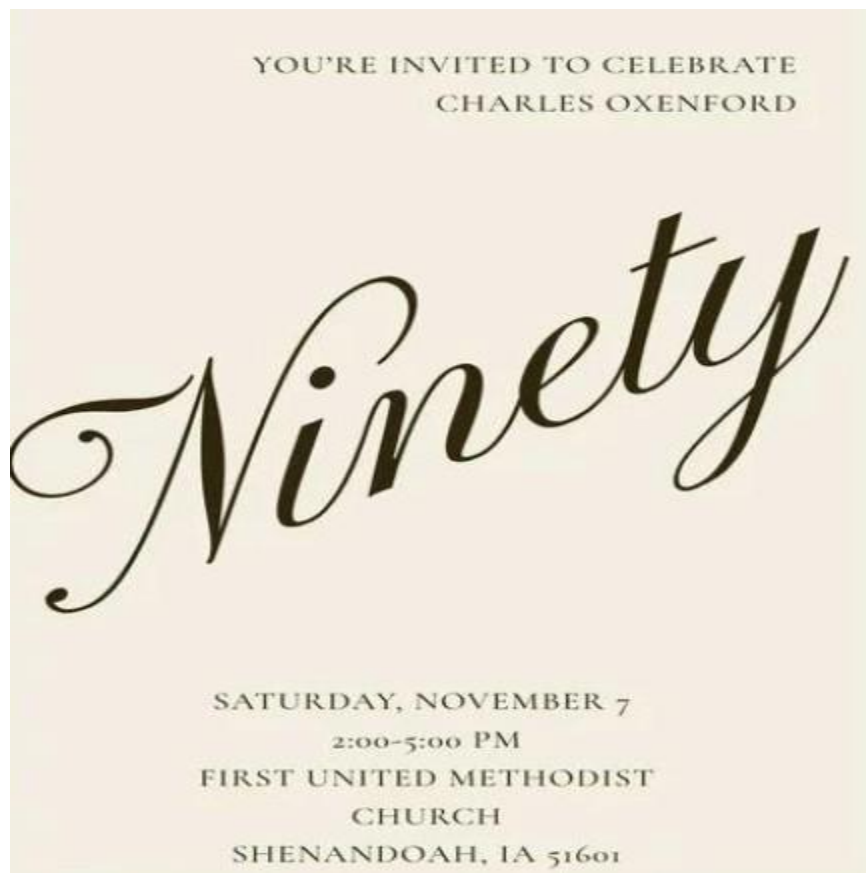
Encouragement can sometimes be scarce in our world. It's not something you'll hear on the news very often. We often struggle to encourage others when we ourselves feel discouraged inside. It's simply becoming a rare commodity in our modern world. Yet for us as disciples, we have every reason to be encouraged in our lives, and to be encouraging to others. We can be encouraged to know that Jesus has overcome our greatest problems, namely sin and death, once and for all (Heb. 10:1-18) and that we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us (Rom. 8:37). It is encouraging to know that while we were yet still sinful, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). It's encouraging to know that no matter what happens to us that God can work in it for good (Rom. 8:28). It is encouraging to know we have a living hope that's rooted in the resurrection of Jesus (1 Pet. 1:3) to an inheritance that is eternal and unfading (1 Pet. 1:5). It is encouraging to know that the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end, that they are new every morning, and the Lord's faithfulness is vastly great (Lam. 3:22-24). This is just a sampling of the great encouragement we have received in Jesus Christ!

Paul would urge the Thessalonians to "encourage one another and build each other up" (1 Thess. 5:11). It's really easy to tear someone down. It's really easy to belittle and criticize people. It's really easy to talk about others without ever helping them. I want to nudge us in the direction of encouragement: to build each other up, to say a kind word, to appreciate someone else's gifts, to say "thank you" when you normally wouldn't, among other things. What else could you do to be an encouraging person? Don't be afraid to be creative!

Adapted from Todd McMillen, Monticello church of Christ, Monticello, AR. Bulletin Digest, March 16, 2026.



Want to support our kids without the pressure of lesson prep? Our Sunday School classes are looking for helper volunteers! No teaching required! We're looking for friendly helpers to jump in about once a month to help the little ones with fun crafts—think glue, tape, crayons, and simple activities. If you'd be open to lending a hand one Sunday a month, please give Sherri Hiser a call at [712-215-2974](tel:712-215-2974). We'd love to have you!



You are invited to help Charles (Chuck) Oxenford celebrate his 90th birthday on November 7th from 2-5 p.m. at the First United Methodist Church. RSVP using this link: <https://bit.ly/4yRPiQg>

What We Have in Christ

In Christ we have:

A love that can never be fathomed;
A life that can never die;
A righteousness that can never be tarnished;
A peace that can never be understood;
A rest that can never be disturbed;
A joy that can never be diminished;
A hope that can never be disappointed;

A glory that can never be clouded;
A light that can never be darkened;
A happiness that can never be interrupted;
A strength that can never be enfeebled;
A purity that can never be defiled;
A beauty that can never be marred;
A wisdom that can never be baffled;
Resources that can never be exhausted;
And heaven that can never be ended.

Unknown