

New Hope Lutheran Church

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January 31, 2021
4th Sunday after Epiphany

Coming Events

English services have been paused,
until March 7, 2pm at **Regent St.**

Finnish services have been paused,
until March 7, 10am at **Voima Hall.**

Sermons are available on our website nhlc.ca

We now have hymns you can hear using the link provided.
One at the beginning and one at the end of the bulletin.

In our prayers Fred, Esme, Martha.

Funeral Sirkka Porkola 76 yrs



Comforting God; our hearts are saddened by the death of Sirkka Porkola. May your love shine down on this family and their friends. May they know your presence is near to them. May they find comfort in your word, and your promise of everlasting life.

Guide them in this time we pray through Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hymn - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bFm7B_0AY8

Psalm 111

- 1 Praise the LORD. I will extol the LORD with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.
- 2 Great are the works of the LORD; they are pondered by all who delight in them.
- 3 Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever.
- 4 He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and compassionate.
- 5 He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.
- 6 He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations.
- 7 The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.
- 8 They are established for ever and ever, enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.
- 9 He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever— holy and awesome is his name.
- 10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

Prayer of the Day

Compassionate God, you gather the whole universe into your radiant presence and continually reveal your Son as our Savior. Bring wholeness to all that is broken and speak truth to us in our confusion, that all creation will see and know your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading “Deuteronomy 18:15 – 20”

15 The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him. **16** For this is what you asked of the LORD your God at Horeb on the day of the assembly when you said, “Let us not hear the voice of the LORD our God nor see this great fire anymore, or we will die.” **17** The LORD said to me: “What they say is good. **18** I will raise up for them a prophet like you from among their fellow Israelites, and I will put my words in his mouth. He will tell them everything I command him. **19** I myself will call to account anyone who does not listen to my words that the prophet speaks in my name. **20** But a prophet who presumes to speak in my name anything I have not

commanded, or a prophet who speaks in the name of other gods, is to be put to death.”

Second Reading “1 Corinthians 8:1 – 13”

1 Now about food sacrificed to idols: We know that “We all possess knowledge.” But knowledge puffs up while love builds up. **2** Those who think they know something do not yet know as they ought to know. **3** But whoever loves God is known by God. **4** So then, about eating food sacrificed to idols: We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” **5** For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), **6** yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. **7** But not everyone possesses this knowledge. Some people are still so accustomed to idols that when they eat sacrificial food they think of it as having been sacrificed to a god, and since their conscience is weak, it is defiled. **8** But food does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do. **9** Be careful, however, that the exercise of your rights does not become a stumbling block to the weak. **10** For if someone with a weak conscience sees you, with all your knowledge, eating in an idol’s temple, won’t that person be emboldened to eat what is sacrificed to idols? **11** So this weak brother or sister, for whom Christ died, is destroyed by your knowledge. **12** When you sin against them in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ. **13** Therefore, if what I eat causes my brother or sister to fall into sin, I will never eat meat again, so that I will not cause them to fall.

Gospel “Mark 1:21 – 28

They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, and he cried out, “What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God.” But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent, and come out of him!” And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, “What is this? A new teaching — with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him.” At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee

Sermon
Bishop Susan Johnson
(National Bishop)

Grace to you and peace in the name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. And greetings to you from your siblings in Christ from coast to coast to coast that make up this part of the family of God that we call the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada.

Mark's gospel is really interesting. At least to me it is! It is so compact, so fast moving. In some ways. It's like the *Readers Digest* condensed version of the gospels.

This morning's gospel lesson starts at only the 21st verse of the 1st chapter. But in the 20 verses prior we have heard John the Baptist proclaim prepare the way of the Lord, Jesus has been baptized, then tempted in the wilderness and then the first disciples have been called. That is compact writing!

Today's gospel lesson is also jam packed. Jesus teaches at the synagogue in Capernaum as one who has authority. A man approaches, full of an unclean spirit. The spirit taunts Jesus. Jesus rebukes the spirit and calls the spirit out. The crowd is amazed at both the teaching and the healing and Jesus' fame spreads.

Jesus teaches with authority and the unclean spirit taunts him. What does this mean to us in our times when the phrase "fake news" has entered our regular conversation?

Jesus is not just any self-proclaimed prophet. He is the holy one of God. Even his enemies recognize this. When the unclean spirit speaks out, Jesus calls out what is not right. He names the evil.

Martin Luther King Jr. said "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter."

What do these statements of Jesus and of Martin Luther King Jr. mean to us right now in the light of the happenings that have been taking place at the capitol in the United States?

The current pandemic has become the focus of much of our lives. The temptation is for us to be very inward looking, focused on our bubble, and our work, and our provinces' restrictions and numbers of cases and numbers of deaths.

But the realities of COVID call us to look out beyond ourselves to the see the ways that the pandemic is pointing out and

underlining disparities and structural inequities around the world and in Canada.

In Canada there are higher incidence rates of COVID in poorer and racialized communities. Many in those communities also experience more severe symptoms often due to underlying health conditions due to poverty.

Women in the workforce have faced more challenges than men have. They often bear the primary burden of childcare and homeschooling and have fallen farther behind in terms of the gendered pay gap.

There has also been an increase in domestic violence in Canada and around the world as lockdowns have increased both stress and proximity.

We may be concerned because there are worries about us not having enough vaccine to keep up with our capacity to vaccinate. Yet there are many developing countries that have still not received any vaccine. And recent news has shown that countries that are willing to pay above market value for vaccines are able to jump the queue and procure them faster.

When I think about these things and then look back on today's text, Jesus' actions cause me to ask these questions.

First what is the evil, what is the injustice, what are the evil spirits that need to be named and confronted around us?

Second, how can we, like Martin Luther King Jr. and like Jesus "stop being silent about things that matter." For to do this is to participate in the new life that Jesus promises us.

It is hard for us to know how and when to speak out. We would usually rather wait for things to change and problems to go away.

But speaking out to injustice, speaking out to lies, is part of Jesus' command to love our neighbours. It is a way we show our commitment to the common good. It is a way that we can follow the way of Jesus and live by his example.

I recently heard Archbishop Linda Nicholls talk about the moral injury that people are experiencing. So many things happening around us that break our understanding of what our moral code is. Even after the pandemic ends, we will need to continue working to address this moral injury. We will need to follow Jesus in speaking out against injustice, working for healing, and building up healthy community. But we are not alone.

In this time of Epiphany we begin by remembering the wise ones who followed a star to find the Christ child, the light of the world. In the season of Epiphany we reflect on how we are called to follow and share that light. Jesus continues to call to each of us to follow him and sends the spirit to nurture the gifts we have been given to work to build God's reign among us. It is the source of our light, our hope, our love and our strength.

Amen.

Prayers

Guided by Christ made known to the nations, let us offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all people in need.

For all who share the gospel and proclaim freedom in Christ throughout the world: prophets, teachers, pastors, deacons, and lay leaders; for the church and its ministries, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For all God's works in creation: plants and animals, water and soil, forests and farms; and for those tasked with protecting our natural resources and all that exists, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For government and leaders: cities and nations, rescue professionals and legal aid attorneys, elected officials and grassroots organizers; for all responsible for the well-being of civil society, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For those who suffer in mind, body, or spirit: those who are sick and hospitalized, those living with HIV/AIDS, those struggling with mental illness, those who are hungry or homeless, and all in any need; for caregivers, hospice workers, and home health aides, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

For the covenant God made with us in the waters of baptism, in thanksgiving for the baptized who have died in the Lord, let us pray. **Have mercy, O God.**

Merciful God, hear the prayers of your people, spoken or silent, for the sake of the one who dwells among us, your Son, Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

Hymn - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CJHSR8Dsqs>