

New Hope Lutheran Church

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May 9, 2021

6th Sunday of Easter



Happy Mother's Day

Coming Events

All services have been cancelled.

May 11 6:30pm Zoom Raamatupiiri
May 12 6:30pm Council mtg **Zoom**
May 14 7:00pm Confirmation **Zoom**

In our prayers Ruth, Fred, Esme, Martha.

Remembering Elle Korpela 99yrs
Erkki Leinala 74yrs



O God, you are the hope of the saints, the light that filled their hearts, the love that never failed them. Comfort those who mourn, especially the families of Elle Korpela and Erkki Leinala, and in your time bring us to our eternal home. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, you have prepared for those who love you joys beyond understanding. Pour into our hearts such love for you that, loving you above all things, we may obtain your promises, which exceed all we can desire; through Jesus Christ, your Son and our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Opening Hymn – https://youtu.be/2j10LV_y0Jw

Note – hymn not available until May 8, 2021

Psalm 98

- 1 Sing to the LORD a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him.
- 2 The LORD has made his salvation known and revealed his righteousness to the nations.
- 3 He has remembered his love and his faithfulness to Israel; all the ends of the earth have seen the salvation of our God.
- 4 Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth, burst into jubilant song with music;
- 5 make music to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of singing,
- 6 with trumpets and the blast of the ram's horn— shout for joy before the LORD, the King.
- 7 Let the sea resound, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it.
- 8 Let the rivers clap their hands, let the mountains sing together for joy;
- 9 let them sing before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples with equity.

First Reading “Acts 10:44 – 48”

44 While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message. **45** The circumcised believers who had come with Peter were astonished that the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out even on Gentiles. **46** For they heard them speaking in tongues and praising God. Then Peter said, **47** “Surely no one can stand in the way of their being baptized with water. They have received the Holy Spirit just as we have.” **48** So he ordered that they be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked Peter to stay with them for a few days.

Second Reading “James 5:13 – 16”

13 Is anyone among you in trouble? Let them pray. Is anyone happy? Let them sing songs of praise. **14** Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. **15** And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. **16** Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.

Gospel “John 15:9 – 17”

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. **10** If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. **11** I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. **12** My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. **13** Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command. **15** I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. **16** You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. **17** This is my command: Love each other.

Sermon

“James”

On the surface, a sermon based on anything from the book of James might seem like an odd choice for Mother's Day. You see, the book of James is a bit of an oddity among Epistles in that it is more ethical than doctrinal. It is written with one eye on Jesus' sermon on the mount, and the other eye on the book of Proverbs; which results in a lot of practical advice on how to live the Christian lifestyle. Kind of a handbook on “do this, but don't do that”, regarding the Christian lifestyle.

Essentially this book shows one of the church's early pastors confronting, diagnosing, and dealing with areas of misbelief and misbehavior that showed up in congregations under his charge. James wants to get in your business and challenge how you live, meaning that it is filled with short wisdom speeches full of

metaphors and one-liners. The overriding message is that life's trials can produce endurance and help us find wholeness where we live out what we believe. Now that I've said all that out loud, it also might remind us of mothers.

James wants to remind us that so often in life we are called to choose between anxiety and trust. For whatever reason, our entire lives are often filled with worry. When we are very young, we worry about things like "*where did my mother go? And why can't she find me when I'm only hiding under a clothes rack at the superstore?*" As we grow older we worry about who our friends are and how do I keep them as my friends? Getting even older we may worry about our looks, our clothes, and where we fit into our social circle. Then we become adults, and all those other worries seem like nothing, compared to our new worries. In most of those earlier years we take our worries to someone like our mothers because we trust them and what they have to tell us. They also help soothe our worries.

The book of James addresses worries in a similar way. Too often we ask ourselves if we can trust God in horrible times? James doesn't just say "yes we can", but also tells us how. Kind of like a mother. You may notice that for James, many of his pieces of advice involve prayer and you can see he doesn't just say that because prayer is often encouraged in the Bible, but because it has been his source of hope and encouragement in his difficult times. So this lesson encourages us to live a life of faith-filled prayer in order that our focus is on God, and we might live according to what we believe.

A tension people often live with is the stress between believing in God, yet living so much of our lives as though we don't believe in God. We believe the poor deserve our mercy, but don't really want to give them anything that might help them, especially if it comes out of our pockets. We believe that God created the earth and asks us to look after it, but we don't seem to have a lot of objections to destroying creation if it benefits us somehow. In many ways it is a tension similar to our adolescent years when we know what actions would upset our parents, but we go ahead with them anyway, perhaps because our peers encourage it. And then in those years, how often did we attempt to act righteous and try arguing our way out of a situation when those actions were questioned by our parents?

Of course, maturity cures a lot of that sort of thinking. And that is what James is encouraging in us – a Christian maturity where we begin to see just why and how a full prayer life and trusting God to see us through, is part of getting rid of those tensions and worry, rather than just counting on our own efforts.

So, while the book of James may initially seem to be an odd base for a Mother's Day sermon, it actually is very nurturing in a motherly fashion. It deals with problems in a very practical manner - as is shown from our very short lesson from the end of the book. Dorothy Canfield Fisher is quoted as saying: "*A mother is not a person to lean on, but a person to make leaning unnecessary.*" We learn from mothers, and because of what we have gleaned there, we become more independent and mature, knowing how to handle most of our worries.

In a similar fashion, there is a lot of practical advice to learn from James, and in learning about the use of prayer and forgiveness, we mature as Christians, learning to trust in God so that we become more secure in our faith, and in our actions. So make use of prayer, look to God for guidance, and in doing so, learn to trust our creator for all our needs – and to give thanks for what we have received. Amen.

Hymn – <https://youtu.be/afk2NOWFOQo>
Note – hymn not available until May 8, 2021

Prayers

Alive in the risen Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit, we bring our prayers before God who promises to hear us and answer in steadfast love.

Loving God, you call us to be your fruit-bearing church. Strengthen the bonds among all Christian churches. Today we pray for the Moravian Church, giving thanks for the life and witness of Nicolaus Ludwig von Zinzendorf, renewer of the church and hymnwriter. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Creating God, the earth praises you. The seas roar and the hills sing for joy. Fill the earth with your love so that by their song, all creatures of land and sea and sky, burrowing and soaring, may call us to join with them in praise. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Faithful Savior, you conquer the world not with weapons but with undying love. Plant your word in the hearts of the nations' leaders and give them your Spirit, so that the peoples of the world may live in peace. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Caring Healer, you forget no one and accompany the lonely. Be present with those who are sick or suffering. Provide for those needing homes or medical care and point us towards life-changing responses to these needs in our own communities. Be with the dying. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gracious God, as a mother comforts her child, you comfort us. Bless mothers and mothering people in our lives. Comfort those who miss their mothers, mothers who grieve, those who grieve because they cannot be mothers, and those who have never known a loving mother. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Gentle Redeemer, all who die in you abide in your presence forever. We remember with thanksgiving those who shared your love throughout their lives. Keep us united with them in your lasting love. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

In the hope of new life in Christ, O Lord, we raise our prayers to you, trusting in your never-ending goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray...

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Hymn – <https://youtu.be/fPHOwT6u8L8>
Note – hymn not available until May 8, 2021