

New Hope Lutheran Church

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June 20, 2021

4th Sunday after Pentecost



Happy
Father's
Day

Coming Events

All services have been cancelled.

June 22 6:30pm Zoom Raamatupiiri

In our prayers Ruth, Fred, Esme, Martha.

Opening Hymn – Luther Bells
https://youtu.be/pXTK9V_58C4

Prayer of the Day

O God of creation, eternal majesty, you preside over land and sea, sunshine and storm. By your strength pilot us, by your power preserve us, by your wisdom instruct us, and by your hand protect us, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalm 107:1 – 3, 23 – 32

- 1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.
- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,
- 3 those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.
- 23 Some went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters.
- 24 They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep.
- 25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.
- 26 They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away.
- 27 They reeled and staggered like drunkards; they were at their wits' end.
- 28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.
- 29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.
- 30 They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.
- 31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.
- 32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

First Reading “Job 38:1 – 11”

1 Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm. He said: 2 “Who is this that obscures my plans with words without knowledge? 3 Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. 4 “Where were you when I laid the earth’s foundation? Tell me, if you understand. 5 Who marked off its dimensions? Surely you know! Who stretched a measuring line across it? 6 On what were its footings set, or who laid its cornerstone— 7 while the morning stars sang

together and all the angels shouted for joy? 8 “Who shut up the sea behind doors when it burst forth from the womb, 9 when I made the clouds its garment and wrapped it in thick darkness, 10 when I fixed limits for it and set its doors and bars in place, 11 when I said, ‘This far you may come and no farther; here is where your proud waves halt’?

Second Reading “2 Corinthians 6:1 – 13”

1 As God’s co-workers we urge you not to receive God’s grace in vain. 2 For he says, “In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you.” I tell you, now is the time of God’s favor, now is the day of salvation. 3 We put no stumbling block in anyone’s path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. 4 Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; 5 in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; 6 in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; 7 in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; 8 through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; 9 known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; 10 sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything. 11 We have spoken freely to you, Corinthians, and opened wide our hearts to you. 12 We are not withholding our affection from you, but you are withholding yours from us. 13 As a fair exchange—I speak as to my children—open wide your hearts also.

Gospel “Luke 15:11 – 19”

11 Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything. 17 “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’

Sermon

“Realization”

One of the toughest issues parents face is when their children get to that rebellious stage of life; and I don't mean the terrible twos, but the other rebellious stage of life. Do you remember being in that stage? You may have felt that so much was wrong with the world; especially since you seemed to be the most disadvantaged person at that point in time. How we longed to do what we pleased, when we pleased, and as we pleased. But we couldn't because some person (or persons) wouldn't allow it. And it totally befuddled us as to why they wouldn't allow us to roam free. Did we not ask ourselves; what was the point of all the constraints placed on where we could go, what we could do, and when we could do it?

For anyone asking such questions, the first part of our gospel for today gives a pretty good explanation. We have a son who asks for his entire inheritance while still a very young man. Probably what shocks us the most, is that it appears that the father was something of a fool! Who gives such freedom to their child without a second thought? The son asked for something totally outrageous – and it was freely given to him!

I suppose the end result was pretty predictable. The young man moved to someplace more exciting to him (noticeably far from father's scrutiny), and spends his time living it up with an outrageous lifestyle. I'm sure we can all imagine how he had a lot of friends to begin with, friends who stayed with him – at least as long as the money held out. He probably held a lot of wild parties as well, parties that lasted until the resources were depleted.

I suspect that as the funds kept getting smaller, the young man kept telling himself that it was time to stop, time to slow down the draining of his bank account, time to put a plug in the hole. But the temptation to keep those fair weather friends, to keep the parties, to keep *the lifestyle he was accustomed to* – well the result of plugging one hole is pretty minor when your attempting to keep liquid in a sieve.

His problem was that he thought his own resources were enough to keep him going indefinitely. He didn't see a need for any help, he could make it on his own, and to think otherwise would appear to be some sort of failure.

And then came the inevitable crash, not just for the young man, but for the whole country. The best this son could do was to take on one of the most demeaning jobs possible, working for starvation wages.

It's said that when one hits rock bottom, clarity prevails. All of a sudden one begins to realize what is actually important in life and what's not. That is the time when – should we choose – we look for guidance. Our first part of the gospel for today puts it quite forcefully with the words: “*when he came to his senses.*” It was at that point that his actions for the future became clear. He was in desperate need of his father, the same person he'd taken advantage of, the same person he'd run away from, the same person whose teachings he had ignored for so long.

We should note that this child was very certain about one thing, and that was that he could depend on his father to help him out of a desperate situation. He didn't even contemplate that his father might reject him outright, but was absolutely certain that he would be taken in and cared for, even if it was only to be a servant.

There is an important lesson here for all of us. Regardless of how far we may have ever strayed, regardless of how far off track we may have fallen, regardless of how much we may have offended the heavenly Father – that father will always take us back, will always take us in, and will always love us beyond what any of us can ever imagine. That father will do whatever it takes to bring us back into the fold: forgive us, welcome us, and guide us. Thanks be to God for that. Amen.

Hymn – Kirkkokuoro
<https://youtu.be/XTXXROACCMc>

Prayers

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

Holy God, you gather your people from east and west, north and south. We pray for the mission of the church throughout the world, that your steadfast love may be made known to all peoples. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You laid the foundations of the earth and the waters are the womb of creation. The morning stars sing your name and all creation shouts for joy. We pray for your blessed creation, that it may continue to flourish and magnify your glory. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You keep watch over all nations. We pray for countries experiencing violence, hunger, and unrest. Guide worldwide and local community organizations in their efforts to establish safety and justice. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You are close to the brokenhearted and near to those in distress. We pray for those who are experiencing oppression. Liberate us from the systems and chains that bind us. Remove the barriers that separate us from one another. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You dwell with us in this faith community. We pray for our leaders and elders. Grant them knowledge, patience, and kindness, that through their leadership you may be exalted in this assembly. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Your love endures in all situations. On this Father's Day, we pray for those who are fathers or wish to be fathers, for those with broken or strained relationships, for those who are missing their fathers, and for fathers who have lost children. Bless and strengthen them. Lord, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

We lift our prayers to you, O God, trusting in your abiding grace.

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 – JAM Choir
<https://youtu.be/TUeeqka8Sng>