

New Hope Lutheran Church

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June 27, 2021

5th Sunday after Pentecost

Coming Events

All services have been cancelled.

July 4 Semon emailed

In our prayers Ruth, Fred, Esme.

Remembering Jennifer Hawkins 39 yrs



Comforting Lord; we pray for families that are suffering the loss of loved ones. Be with them as they grapple with death in their midst and in their grief. Hold them close to you at this time and bless them with your comforting presence; especially the family of Jennifer Hawkins. We ask in Jesus name. Amen.

Opening Hymn – All Are Welcome - (641)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mTdxFRfEoMs>

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and merciful God, we implore you to hear the prayers of your people. Be our strong defense against all harm and danger, that we may live and grow in faith and hope, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalms 30

- 1 I will exalt you, LORD, for you lifted me out of the depths and did not let my enemies gloat over me.
- 2 LORD my God, I called to you for help, and you healed me.
- 3 You, LORD, brought me up from the realm of the dead; you spared me from going down to the pit.
- 4 Sing the praises of the LORD, you his faithful people; praise his holy name.
- 5 For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.
- 6 When I felt secure, I said, "I will never be shaken."
- 7 LORD, when you favored me, you made my royal mountain stand firm; but when you hid your face, I was dismayed.
- 8 To you, LORD, I called; to the Lord I cried for mercy:
- 9 "What is gained if I am silenced, if I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you? Will it proclaim your faithfulness?"
- 10 Hear, LORD, and be merciful to me; LORD, be my help."
- 11 You turned my wailing into dancing; you removed my sackcloth and clothed me with joy,
- 12 that my heart may sing your praises and not be silent. LORD my God, I will praise you forever.

First Reading "Lamentations 3:22 – 33"

22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. 23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him." 25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; 26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD. 27 It is good for a man to bear the yoke while he is young. 28 Let him sit alone in silence, for the LORD has laid it on him. 29 Let him bury his face in the dust— there may yet be hope. 30 Let him offer his cheek to one who would strike him, and let him be filled with disgrace. 31 For no one is cast off by the Lord forever. 32 Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his

unfailing love. 33 For he does not willingly bring affliction or grief to anyone.

Second Reading "2 Corinthians 8:7 – 15"

7 But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving. 8 I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love by comparing it with the earnestness of others. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich. 10 And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. 13 Our desire is not that others might be relieved while you are hard pressed, but that there might be equality. 14 At the present time your plenty will supply what they need, so that in turn their plenty will supply what you need. The goal is equality, 15 as it is written: "The one who gathered much did not have too much, and the one who gathered little did not have too little."

Gospel "Mark 5:21 – 43"

21 When Jesus had again crossed over by boat to the other side of the lake, a large crowd gathered around him while he was by the lake. 22 Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. 23 He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." 24 So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him. 25 And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. 26 She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. 27 When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, 28 because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." 29 Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering. 30 At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked "Who touched my clothes?" 31 "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" 32 But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. 33 Then the woman, knowing what had happened

to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. **34** He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." **35** While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?" **36** Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe." **37** He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. **38** When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. **39** He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." **40** But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. **41** He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). **42** Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. **43** He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

Sermon

*By Rev. Christie Morrow-Wolfe
Assistant to the Bishop, Eastern Synod*

His name was Jairus. She, on the other hand, had no name—defined in Scripture by only her disease...the Hemorrhaging Woman.

He was part of the temple elite. She was not welcome in the Temple—her continuous, 12-year hemorrhage made her ritually unclean.

Jairus had wealth and power. The woman had nothing having spent everything she had searching for a cure.

Jairus and the woman with the hemorrhage couldn't be any more polar-opposites if they tried. And yet, on this day, we hear that they shared something very important. Desperation.

This morning, we hear a story within a story. We begin with Jairus. A leader in the community. Probably a man used to being in control of the situation and in command of his

resources. Today, however...he is desperate. His only child is near death and there's nothing he can do about it except beg Jesus to come and lay hands on her so she may be made well and live. Not hesitating...Jesus, follows him towards his home.

On their way, a large group of people surge around Jesus. Hidden within the faces of this crowd, is a woman who has been bleeding for 12, long years. Not only has her health be impacted by this disorder, but so has her social and emotional well-being. Her condition has made her an outcast, making contact with her family, friends and worship community, impossible. Having heard about Jesus, she pushes her way through the crowd, only hoping to touch the hem of his cloak. She too is desperate.

The first miracle occurs when she does exactly that. It was that simple...that easy...in the blink of an eye, she has her life back. Her bleeding stops...and so does Jesus. Having felt power leave him, he addresses the crowd to find out who has touched him. In fear and trembling, the woman approaches this teacher-healer, falls at his feet, tells him her story and begs for mercy. Jesus stops and pushes pause in his journey to get to Jairus' daughter to bless this woman with compassion. He calls her 'daughter,' acknowledges her great faith, and then sends her on her way to live her life in fullness once more.

But this interaction delays him from getting to Jairus' daughter. Word comes that the young girl has now died. But Jesus is undeterred. He comforts Jairus' as they continue to the family home ...'do not fear, only believe,' he tells the distraught temple official. And upon pushing his way through the gathered mourners who were already weeping in grief, he enters the house, he takes the child by her hand and tells her to get up. And she does just that. She walks about, and then, I imagine, goes to the kitchen to find a snack.

Now I know and understand that depending on where you're situated, you may have more or less of a degree of hindsight as we begin to transition out of this time of pandemic. As more and more people are vaccinated, I feel more and more hopeful. And maybe this is why I was readily able to see some parallels between our Gospel story today and the time and place in which we have found or continue to find ourselves over the past 15 months.

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In a blog-post from the end of April, Diana Butler Bass talks about "displacement" and how the pandemic has led to a feeling of being removed from our everyday lives and the way we relate, move and have our being.¹ The woman with the hemorrhage and Jairus have also been displaced by the events in their lives and I would imagine, are feeling rather discombobulated by their circumstances. The woman with the hemorrhage has effectively been physically removed from her worshiping community as well as her social relationships. She has been in self-isolation, if you will, for twelve long years.

Jairus has had his world turned upside down by a sudden illness and subsequent death of a loved one—an experience devastatingly familiar to over 25,000 Canadians and 3.69 million people world-wide who have lost loved ones to this virus.²

The woman with the hemorrhage and Jairus have experienced their fair-share of grief and loss. The woman by the loss of the life she once knew; separated from those things and people who give her life meaning and depth. She has been languishing; likely grieving and feeling the loss of the life she once lived.

Jairus' grief is more acute but incredibly profound. His daughter, who was gravely ill, has died. Suddenly. In an instant, life as he knows it has made an unwelcomed turn. He is living every parents' worst nightmare. His grief, however short-lived, is palpable.

It's into this mess of emotion...of illness, grief and loss, of languishing and despair that Jesus comes alongside. Over the past 15 months or so, there have been many people the world over, I'm sure, who have prayed for God to intervene in this pandemic. To bring an end to the illness, loneliness, isolation, fear, desperation. And while most of us have experienced a sense of this at one time or another, the inequities laid bare by this pandemic mean that certain sectors of our society have bore the weight of the catastrophic outcomes of COVID-19. I'm thinking of racialized front-line workers who have no choice but to show up to work so the rest of us can stay home, thus exposing them to a higher proportion of illness and sometimes death. I'm thinking of women who have bore the economic consequences of reducing their hours to care for children who

¹ Diana Butler Bass. <https://dianabutlerbass.substack.com/p/religion-after-pandemic?token=eyJ1c2VyX2lkIjozMz0NTkwNCwicG9zdF9pZCI6MzU2MDU3ODIsIi8iOiJZOHRYSIsImIhdCI6MTYyMTYyMDEwNywiZ>

² At the time of writing this sermon (June, 2021). <https://ourworldindata.org/coronavirus-data>

are at home, or have lost their jobs entirely. I'm thinking of our elderly and most vulnerable population who were most susceptible to COVID-19 in the first and second waves and yet, in some places in Canada, still remain under lockdown; unable to see their families or have much interaction with the outside world. I'm willing to bet that many people have found themselves praying for a miracle...praying for God to show up; to finally end this thing, or, in the words of my five-year-old, asking almost daily: "why can't God just make COVID go away so I can go back to school, see my grandma and grandpa, and play with my friends?"

I think one of the most important things coming out of this time is how we have now been given the miracle of sight—an opportunity to see with our own eyes, the inequities laid bare by this pandemic. And with this new sight and insight, those of us in a position of privilege have the obligation to give voice to these inequities and advocate for real and lasting change so that life can be better for everyone. And if our eyes have been opened to the disparities that drive despair during this time of pandemic, maybe this is our call to keep our eyes open to see suffering and to work for justice and equity in our communities; across our country and the world-over.³ We cannot squander or ignore what this pandemic has revealed to us.

This miracle of sight and awareness is both an opportunity and responsibility. But we do not walk this journey alone. We have each other and we have God. These miracle stories as they're told, are not stories that promise a cure for everyone who has faith...but what these stories do, is tell us of a Saviour—a teacher-healer who hears us; who cares for us...who comes alongside us, and who promises to always be with us in times of trouble...in times of joy and in all times in between. Nothing can stop God from being present...not even death.

Barbara Brown Taylor writes:

*Jesus' miracles remind us that the way things are is not the way they will always be. Every healing, every banishment of evil is like a hole poked in the opaque fabric of time and space. The kingdom breaks through and for a moment or two we see how things will be—or how they really are right now in the mind of God— and then it's over.*⁴

The true miracles are ordinary...the way God bumps up against us every day...through prayer... through worship...through our

interaction with each other, and when we are changed in some way by this contact. Sometimes, we are given new sight and insight and called to new action to help reveal God in the here and now. This is the hope of our faith...the ordinary miracles as they unfold each and every day, calling us to new understanding of compassion and grace; to work alongside God whose reign of justice and equity strives each and every day to make life better for everyone. And so we do our best to walk alongside and to live in fervent hope that the way things are now are not the way they will always be. May it be so. Thanks be to God.

Hymn – Healer of Our Every Ill - (612)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v31s4grQ9tQ>

Prayers

Let us come before the triune God in prayer.

God of hope, the ministry of your church extends across borders, from nearby neighbors to far and distant countries. Accompany all those who labor eagerly in service of the gospel, that through your good news all might experience transformation. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Almighty God, we give you thanks for the air we breathe, the water we drink, the land that provides our food. Guard all species of plants and animals from harsh changes in climate and empower us to protect all you have made. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

Righteous God, we pray for nations and their leaders. Give them a spirit of compassion and steer them towards a fair distribution of resources; that none among us would have too much or too little. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

God of healing, your touch has the power to make us whole. We pray for those suffering from physical or mental illness. Embrace those who are sick. Surround them with your unwavering presence. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

We pray for this assembly and all those gathered together in worship. Revive our spirits, renew our relationships, and rekindle our faith, that we might experience resurrection in this community. Lord, in your mercy. **Hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the faithful ancestors in every age whose lives have pointed us towards you. Envelope them in your love, that we may be reunited with one another in the last days. 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 – Oh, for a Thousand Tongues to Sing – (886)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx0rCabJ16c>

³ nytimes.com/2020/03/15/world/europe, accessed on June 1, 2021.

⁴ Barbara Brown Taylor, Bread of Angels, Cowley Publications, 1997, pp. 136-137