

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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July 25, 2021

*9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*

## Coming Events

**All services have been cancelled.**

Aug 1 Sermon emailed

**In our prayers** Ruth, Fred, Esme.

Tentatively we are planning to re-open both Finnish and English worship services on Sunday August 15 in their respective worship locations; Finnish worship at Voima Hall at 10:00 a.m., and English worship at Regent St. beginning at 2:00 p.m. We do expect to have restrictions in place such as wearing a mask and social distancing, as well as receiving the communion wine "in kind", as we did last fall.

We are also tentatively planning a Bilingual Rally Sunday service for Sunday September 12, 10:00 a.m. at Voima Hall so please mark your calendars for this special service.

As we prepare to come together once again, we are reminded that our worship services require worship assistants, beginning in August, and a growing need as restrictions increase. Please consider being a part of this important ministry and let Hilka know of your interest by calling the office at 705-673-2933 or email [office@nhlc.ca](mailto:office@nhlc.ca)

Opening Hymn – We Are Called (720)  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsQ\\_kANdM6U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TsQ_kANdM6U)

## Prayer of the Day

Gracious God, you have placed within the hearts of all your children a longing for your word and a hunger for your truth. Grant that we may know your Son to be the true bread of heaven and share this bread with all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## Psalms 145:10 - 18

- 10** All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you.  
**11** They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might,  
**12** so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom.  
**13** Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does.  
**14** The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.  
**15** The eyes of all look to you, and you give them their food at the proper time.  
**16** You open your hand and satisfy the desires of every living thing.  
**17** The LORD is righteous in all his ways and faithful in all he does.  
**18** The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.

## First Reading “**2 Kings 4:42 – 44**”

**42** A man came from Baal Shalishah, bringing the man of God twenty loaves of barley bread baked from the first ripe grain, along with some heads of new grain. “Give it to the people to eat,” Elisha said. **43** “How can I set this before a hundred men?” his servant asked. But Elisha answered, “Give it to the people to eat. For this is what the LORD says: ‘They will eat and have some left over.’” **44** Then he set it before them, and they ate and had some left over, according to the word of the LORD.

## Second Reading “**Ephesians 3:14 – 21**”

**14** For this reason I kneel before the Father, **15** from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. **16** I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, **17** so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, **18** may have power, together

with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, **19** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. **20** Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, **21** to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

## Gospel “**John 6:1 – 21**”

After this Jesus went to the other side of the Sea of Galilee, also called the Sea of Tiberias. A large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Jesus went up the mountain and sat down there with his disciples. Now the Passover, the festival of the Jews, was near. When he looked up and saw a large crowd coming toward him, Jesus said to Philip, “Where are we to buy bread for these people to eat?” He said this to test him, for he himself knew what he was going to do. Philip answered him, “Six months’ wages would not buy enough bread for each of them to get a little.” One of his disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to him, “There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish. But what are they among so many people?” Jesus said, “Make the people sit down.” Now there was a great deal of grass in the place; so they sat down, about five thousand in all. Then Jesus took the loaves, and when he had given thanks, he distributed them to those who were seated; so also the fish, as much as they wanted. When they were satisfied, he told his disciples, “Gather up the fragments left over, so that nothing may be lost.” So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of the five barley loaves, left by those who had eaten, they filled twelve baskets. When the people saw the sign that he had done, they began to say, “This is indeed the prophet who is to come into the world.”

When Jesus realized that they were about to come and take him by force to make him king, he withdrew again to the mountain by himself.

## **Jesus Walks on the Water**

When evening came, his disciples went down to the sea, got into a boat, and started across the sea to Capernaum. It was now dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. The sea became rough because a strong wind was blowing. When they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and coming near the boat, and they were terrified. But he said to them, “It is I; do not be afraid.” Then they wanted to

take him into the boat, and immediately the boat reached the land toward which they were going.

## Sermon

*By Deacon Gretchen Peterson  
Assistant to the National Bishop*

Good morning, afternoon or evening. Thank you for welcoming me into your time of worship today. My name is Deacon Gretchen Peterson and I'm speaking to you from my home in Saskatoon, on Treaty 6 territory and the homeland of the Métis.

Our Gospel story today is one we are all probably quite familiar with. Whether we heard it first in Sunday School class or during another Sunday worship time, this story is quite a well-known story of Jesus' ministry.

It comes pretty early on in the Gospel of John, so I was curious what had happened in the 5 previous chapters. John begins with "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Jesus – the Word of God, come in flesh form, to Earth. To be God here on Earth. To remind us of God's ever presence on Earth.

There is no nativity in John, no birth story. We are taken right out onto the road, to walk with Jesus in his ministry amongst the people.

It's a fast-paced Gospel. We are splashed in the river Jordan as John baptises Jesus. We journey along as Jesus calls his first disciples and then performs his first miracle at the Wedding in Cana. We witness Jesus' temper as he cleanses the Temple, to rid the House of God of the money changers. We sit at the table and at the well, as Jesus visits with those who are considered not appropriate for him to associate with – Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman. Jesus performs two more miracles – healing a royal official's son and healing a lame man near Bethsaida, this latter one he does on the Sabbath. And we hear Jesus speak about the Son of God, come from God. We hear about the power and the life that this Son of God has. We hear about the promise of life, for all creation.

A quick introduction, a few miracles tossed in, two visits with questionable people, the foretelling of who Jesus truly is and the stage is set for chapter 6.

I'm trying to imagine what Jesus felt like at this moment. He's shown his disciples, the broader community, and the Pharisees some glimpses of who he truly is. And what he's all about. And

why he's here. There's been some rockin' of the Empire's boat. And it sounds like he needs a bit of a break, hence why Jesus tried to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

But word has gotten out about Jesus. And a large crowd kept following him, because they saw the signs that he was doing for the sick. Word has gotten out.

One of the things I love about Jesus is that he pays attention.

We know he pays attention to his disciples, because he cares for them and is constantly trying to bring them up to speed on what the goal is for the ministry.

We know he pays attention to the Pharisees, because he's gotta watch his back and press against the rules and the authority while still trying to stay alive for as long as possible.

But most importantly, we know Jesus pays attention to the littlest, the poorest, the outcast because that is the true essence of who Jesus is.

Often, the message of this Gospel story is to revel in the miracle of taking 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and making that feed 5000 + people. With leftovers. Sure, that's pretty cool.

But perhaps there is another miracle. The miracle of paying attention to those around him and responding to their need.

Perhaps the miracle isn't that Jesus took the 5 loaves and 2 fish and turned that into enough food to feed the thousands.

Perhaps the miracle is that Jesus listened to the needs of the gathered. Their need to have food in order to participate in the Passover. Their need to be fed – not only with words – but also with sustenance.

Paying attention to this detail gives me more hope and more energy to continue participating in the ministry that God has called all of us to. We are all called to pay attention to those around us – the littlest, the poorest, the outcast. And to respond with abundance and overflowing love.

What does that look like for you in your life? Who are you called to pay attention to right now? What do you have that can be turned into an abundance of love and grace?

As I write this sermon, it is the beginning of July. The past few weeks have been tough. We are a country not only wrestling with COVID-19. But we are a country that is finally listening to what our Indigenous siblings have been saying for years and years. I have no idea what things will be like at the end of the

month when you are listening to this sermon. But I know that the discovery of unmarked graves and children's' bodies in the grounds of Residential schools will not be something we are no longer speaking about. And I know that we will not be done the ongoing work of reconciliation, as that takes time and effort and we are called to be engaged in that journey for a long while yet.

Forest fires are raging across British Columbia and we've just had a week of record-breaking high temperatures in the western provinces. It feels uncomfortable and not just because we are so hot. Also because it makes us worry about climate change and how we can make a difference in reversing the effects.

It is a hard time to speak into, especially with a message of abundance. When all around we see abundance – but an abundance of frightening, disturbing, worrisome news. It is hard not to feel overwhelmed by the news every day, which doesn't seem to provide much hope some days.

Over the past few weeks, I've heard many Indigenous folks offer this up, in the midst of the recent discoveries. *First there is Truth, then there is Reconciliation.* We cannot move forward, in any area of our lives, without Truth first.

How can this Gospel today point each of us to a Truth in our lives? What can we take the time to truly pay attention to? What can we be motivated to engage in to spread the love of Jesus and the grace of God to those around us?

It might be the time to lean into something uncomfortable. It might be the time to learn something new. It might be the time to look around at the people gathered near us and listen to what they are saying, so we can work together to feed thousands.

And perhaps out of that paying attention and attending to the needs of those around us, we might be like Jesus today. We may not be able to take 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish and create a feast for thousands out of it. But we can each pay attention. We can look around us and truly see who is gathered, who needs us, who needs God's love.

When we do this, who knows what may happen? Our baskets might overflow! Jesus paid attention to the people. He paid attention to their needs. And attended to them in an overflowing way. Because that's the kind of God we worship and serve. May we be such followers of Christ, that the abundance overflows to all around us. Amen.

Hymn – Let Us Talents and Tongues Employ (674)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QvOnqvWhA>

### Prayers

Rooted in Christ and sustained by the Spirit, we offer our prayers for the church, the world, and all of creation.

We pray for the church. Bless the ministries of our neighboring congregations. Empower churches throughout the world and encourage missionaries who accompany global neighbors. Kindle in us a spirit of collaboration, that all people may know your loving works. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for creation. Send rain to lands experiencing drought and come to the aid of those enduring sweltering heat. Nurture crops grown for the nourishment of your people and conserve aquatic habitats and fish populations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those who govern. Cast out arrogance, selfishness and corruption and instruct those who lead to practice compassion and humility. Inspire them with a vision of the common good and a commitment to ensure that all who hunger are fed. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for those bowed down by heavy burdens: those who are unemployed or underemployed, those unable to find affordable housing, and those without health insurance. Console those who grieve and hear the cries of those who call to you for healing. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We pray for our congregation. Deepen our resolve to use what we have to serve those in need. When we worry that we do not have enough resources for ministry, assure us of your abundance. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We give thanks for those who have died. As you sustained them through all their days, so dwell in our hearts, that we may have the power to comprehend, with all the saints, the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

We lift these and all our prayers to you, O God, confident in the promise of your saving love; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray.

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 – Jesus, Priceless Treasure (775)  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c14lOXlwOwl>