

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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## Pastors:

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## October 10, 2021 Thanksgiving Sunday

### Coming Events

#### Oct 12

2:00 Finnish Bible Study **Finlandia-Impola Room**

#### Oct 13

10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St. (inside)**

6:30 Council Meeting **Regent St**

#### Oct 14

6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**

#### Oct 17

10:00 Finn. Worship Service † **Voima Hall**

2:00 Eng. Worship Service † **Regent St.**

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

**Remembering** Donald Wähämaa 70yrs  
Arvo Paulamäki 86yrs



Mighty, gracious, compassionate Lord, we pray today for the family of Donald Wähämaa and Arvo Paulamäki, that you would comfort them in their grief, guide them in their sorrow, and give them your peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Opening Hymn – For the Beauty of the Earth (879)  
<https://youtu.be/6CFhYi5KHCM>

### Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us your gift of faith, that, forsaking what lies behind and reaching out to what lies ahead, we may follow the way of your commandments and receive the crown of everlasting joy, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

### Psalms 126

<sup>1</sup> When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed.

<sup>2</sup> Our mouths were filled with laughter, our tongues with songs of joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.”

<sup>3</sup> The LORD has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.

<sup>4</sup> Restore our fortunes, LORD, like streams in the Negev.

<sup>5</sup> Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy.

<sup>6</sup> Those who go out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with them.

### First Reading “Joel 2:21 – 27”

**21** Do not be afraid, land of Judah; be glad and rejoice. Surely the LORD has done great things! **22** Do not be afraid, you wild animals, for the pastures in the wilderness are becoming green. The trees are bearing their fruit; the fig tree and the vine yield their riches. **23** Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the LORD your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before. **24** The threshing floors will be filled with grain; the vats will overflow with new wine and oil. **25** “I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten— the great locust and the young locust, the other locusts and the locust swarm— my great army that I sent among you. **26** You will have plenty to eat, until you are full, and you will praise the name of the LORD your God, who has worked wonders for you; never again will my people be shamed. **27** Then you will know that I am in Israel, that I am the LORD your God, and that there is no other; never again will my people be shamed. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### Second Reading “1 Timothy 2:1 – 7”

**1** I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—**2** for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. **3** This is good, and pleases God our

Savior, **4** who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. **5** For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, **6** who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. **7** And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

### Gospel “Matthew 6:25 – 33”

*“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.***

### Sermon

By Rev. Charles Nolting  
“Stress & Worry”

So today we have arrived at our 2<sup>nd</sup> Thanksgiving since the pandemic began. How are you doing with that? For some people, they have adjusted. They wear a mask out of habit to go into a public building. They seek out the hand sanitizer and use some, even if it is the really watery type that squirts all over your clothes because you were expecting the thick stuff and gave the container a vigorous pump. They stay out of large crowds and keep their distance. It may almost be second nature by now.

I used to think I was one of those people, but then the other day I nonchalantly walked into a gas station and was asked to put on a mask. Apparently I had forgotten, and very much shamed,

I pulled one out of my pocket and put it on, wondering what was wrong with me, and how could I so foolishly slip up?

The thing is, this pandemic has been hard on all of us, sometimes in ways we hadn't expected. We have to behave differently and actually think about how we do things differently. We may have gotten a vaccine shot or two, something that may not have happened since public school. We have spent months attempting to avoid other people as best as we can – which probably goes against everything our mind tells us. And then we have watched the world become more and more divided on what the term “common sense” actually means – and who are the trusted authority figures regarding science.

All this has added up to a lot of extra stress for us in one way or another. Even if we are vaccinated, we may worry about catching a mild form of COVID, especially with the latest variant. We may worry about loved ones winding up in the ICU because for whatever reason they haven't gotten their shots. We may wonder how long we are going to be cooped up in our homes, even if things are beginning to look up. And we may wonder about looming worldwide shortages that are so often predicted on the news these days.

We may also spend that time pondering if the world will ever be the same again as it was 3 years ago. Look what happened after 9/11. No more going into an airplane cockpit during a flight to say hi to the pilots and see how it was going. I used to love doing that! But that was a long time ago.

It would seem that every time the world has a major crisis we wind up losing something from our past. And, if we've reached a certain age, it seems like we are doing that over and over.

All this can add a lot of stress to our lives, and research shows that stress, especially constant stress, can actually shorten our lives. Constant worry and living in a state of perpetual anxiety can reduce life expectancy. When our body remains in a state of chronic stress, it can cause health conditions like high blood pressure, stomach ulcers, and cardiovascular diseases. We are also more likely to cope by engaging in unhealthy habits that can lead to a shortening of life or fatal accidents.

In these times then, I find it rather intriguing that Jesus speaks to us from so far in the past about our situation today. Our gospel very clearly tells us not to worry about our life. While in Jesus' time worries seem to center around food and clothing rather than a pandemic, worry is still worry 2000 years later. The birds and flowers in the field still exist in ways similar to

Jesus time, and they haven't gotten around to working any harder in all those years.

The verse that speaks to me so very clearly today is verse 27, where Jesus asks: “*Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?*” Today's research says “*no it can't. In fact, it will actually shorten your life.*”

So what are we to do with the stresses and worries we carry around with us in these times? Jesus wisely tells us to look first to the kingdom of God. If we are going to worry excessively about anything, be excessive in caring for your soul. Seek to help others as Jesus showed us, and in the process you will lessen your own anxiety, realizing that we actually are ok, and thanking God for that.

I know that up till now, this hasn't sounded like much of a Thanksgiving sermon, but the point is that when we get into the habit of regularly giving thanks to God for all the good things that bless our lives, we do that by looking at how wonderful our lives are, rather than just moaning and stressing over what is all wrong. When we seek out the kingdom as Jesus suggests, we begin to see how much and how bountifully we are blessed. When our hearts are thankful, they are not stressed. Who has ever gotten chronic high blood pressure from discovering how wonderful their lives are?

So give thanks on this and every day! Give thanks to God for the blessing of family and friends, the blessing of a home, food, clothing, and income. As much as we can so often see only the hardships of life, fussing over them does nothing to improve our lives. I know it's easier to lament and complain, and tricky to cut loose in praising God, but discovering our blessings (however large or small they might be), and giving thanks for them is actually healthy for our physical bodies, as well as our soul. And to that I say: Thanks be to God! Amen.

Hymn – We Plow the Fields and Scatter (681)  
<https://youtu.be/ccVEjKfAV4>

### Prayers

God whose giving knows no ending, you invite the whole world to your table of mercy. Hear us as we pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need.

God, you give all people a place at the table. Nurture and encourage campus ministries, new congregations, and workplace chaplaincies. Support all parts of the church that meet people where they are and offer accompaniment through

daily challenges and joys. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

You give nourishment to the birds of the air and the lilies of the fields. Sustain all creatures who rely on the earth for sustenance. Water parched ground, dry flooded fields, temper heat waves and frosts, and give sunlight and shade. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you give wisdom to your people. Enlighten all leaders. Inspire and guide our federal and provincial leaders, our local leaders, and all who represent us in our government. Give them patience and perspective to choose wisely for our common good. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you give nourishment to those who hunger. Bring poverty and food insecurity to an end. Give dignity and adequate employment to those who are unemployed and underemployed. Sustain us all at your welcoming banquet of love and justice. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you give community to those who are lonely. Be with our biological families, our chosen families, and our church family as we gather for the Thanksgiving holiday. Send your compassionate presence to those who are lonely, those who are separated or estranged from their families, and those whose loved ones have died. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, you give a feast of endless thanksgiving. We are grateful for the saints gathered at your table who have gone before us. Unite us with them whenever we give thanks to you. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God, your welcome is wider than we can imagine. Receive our prayers for the sake of your beloved Son, Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us, and 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 – On What Has Now Been Sown (550)  
<https://youtu.be/2esMntJSozg>