

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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**November 14, 2021**

*The 25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*

## Coming Events

Nov 16

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

Nov 17

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

2:00 Mission Circle **Finlandia-Impola Room**

Nov 18

6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**

Nov 21

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

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

**In our prayers** Ruth, Esme.

**Remembering** Lennard Joki 73 yrs



Merciful Lord; we pray for all who are bereaved on this day. Be with them to give them comfort, strength, and guidance. We especially pray for the family of Lennard Joki that your loving arms may enfold and comfort them in their faith. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Opening Hymn – Built on a Rock (652)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ah4NDHjVf1M>

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your sovereign purpose brings salvation to birth. Give us faith to be steadfast amid the tumults of this world, trusting that your kingdom comes and your will is done, we pray through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalms 16

<sup>1</sup> Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.

<sup>2</sup> I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing."

<sup>3</sup> I say of the holy people who are in the land, "They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."

<sup>4</sup> Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.

<sup>5</sup> Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.

<sup>6</sup> The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

<sup>7</sup> I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

<sup>8</sup> I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

<sup>9</sup> Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,

<sup>10</sup> because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

<sup>11</sup> You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

First Reading "Daniel 12:1 – 3"

**1** At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. **2** Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake: some to everlasting life, others to shame and everlasting contempt. **3** Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.

Second Reading "Hebrews 10:11 – 25"

**11** Day after day every priest stands and performs his religious duties; again and again he offers the same sacrifices, which

can never take away sins. **12** But when this priest had offered for all time one sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, **13** and since that time he waits for his enemies to be made his footstool. **14** For by one sacrifice he has made perfect forever those who are being made holy. **15** The Holy Spirit also testifies to us about this. First he says: **16** "This is the covenant I will make with them after that time, says the Lord. I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds." **17** Then he adds: "Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more." **18** And where these have been forgiven, sacrifice for sin is no longer necessary. **19** Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, **20** by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, **21** and since we have a great priest over the house of God, **22** let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. **23** Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. **24** And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, **25** not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel "Mark 13:1 – 8"

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*As Jesus was leaving the temple, one of his disciples said to him, "Look, Teacher! What massive stones! What magnificent buildings!" "Do you see all these great buildings?" replied Jesus. "Not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down." As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John and Andrew asked him privately, "Tell us, when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are all about to be fulfilled?" Jesus said to them: "Watch out that no one deceives you. Many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am he,' and will deceive many. When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains.*

*The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.***

## Sermon

By Rev. Charles Nolting  
"Apocoalyse?"

I have to admit, I'm not a big fan of this passage from Mark. Oh sure, it starts out innocently enough; the disciples are in awe over the accomplishments of human technology, kind of like a 4 year old with an I-pad for the first time. But then, Jesus being Jesus, he has to throw a wrench into the conversation, informing them that it will all disappear, along with a vast array of awful events predicted for the future.

Now I don't know about you, but I like the Bible to make me feel comfortable and safe, and these verses don't do it for me. I mean, The Message translates the last line to say: "*These things are nothing compared to what's coming.*" Forget horror films, the Bible can seem way more scary. It can lead one to a sense of utter futility, and asking: Is that all we have to look forward to?

What we need to be reminded of is that the Bible contains a variety of writing styles. Some books are poetry. Others are like reading a book on history. Yet others have a more legal bent, being filled with rules or wisdom. This morning we have in our hands a strange variety of Scripture called "eschatological hope", or apocalyptic writings. The two notable ones are the book of Daniel and the book of Revelation, although you get a bit of it here and there in other places such as our gospel.

Essentially it's the kind of writing that speaks of the end of the world, but often in riddles. The object of this literature however, is not to frighten us, but in general was to reconcile the righteousness of God with the suffering condition of His righteous servants on earth. It speaks to those who are enduring excessive hardships, wondering where God is, and gives them a reason to keep going and not lose faith in God.

Now I know we too may feel that we are looking as if the apocalypse is near since we wrapped up a recent climate summit with COP 26 and - while there may be some hope for the future of the earth - it doesn't exactly look rosy. This rock we live on has been heating up for decades and only a few dedicated people have been paying attention. While we may have joked at one time that it would be nice to see warmer winters, now that we are beginning to see the results, it isn't too pretty.

Parts of the earth are drowning due to too much water from wild storms, others are burning up with drought and forest fires due to a lack of water, and cold and hot weather are appearing in places they have no business appearing. It's kind of like we've been living on a flat dish of water kept in balance for millennia, and somebody tipped it to one side. Parts of it are overly dry and the rest is too wet.

I know that in this part of the country things seem to be ok so we might not be overly concerned. However, from western Ontario to the Rockies its been overly dry for a couple of years, and that means our bread basket has less food in it than it used to. And I think we know enough about economics to realize that if food gets scarce, we are going to pay a heavy price for it.

It's not helping that the world is so divided. Rich and poor countries have different ideas. Economic concerns are put at odds with care for the Earth. It's sad that this has been on our radar for 20 years already and we really haven't taken it seriously, telling ourselves there is always more time. We face a problem with thinking that if something doesn't affect us directly, then we don't have to care. But might this not affect us more directly in the future? On a global scale, some island nations are already shrinking due to oceans rising. Once the islands disappear, where will they go? If drought burns out multiple farm communities around the globe, where will those people go? Who will support them?

I think it really is about time we all came to the conclusion that climate change is a real crisis and encourage our world leaders to treat it as such. I admire the young activists and their determination to speak out, and I also understand why they want to be so radical. How many of us are going to be around to see the worst of global warming? They are the ones who will have to deal with the worst of it.

For those of us who lived through the Cold War with the threat of nuclear disaster looming over our heads, this is comparable to how younger people feel today. Back in the day, people protested, and action finally led to disarmament treaties. We can still make change happen. And going by how quickly the COVID crisis has been handled (even though the battle continues on), it is possible for humans to change our attitude towards the stewardship of this earth God has left us in charge of.

Now that I've made you feel as good about our future as Jesus does in our lesson, you may be wondering if there is any hope.

There actually is good news to be found in apocalyptic literature, which is why it was written in the first place. First of all, a veil has been lifted to warn us that such frightening events are to be expected.

Secondly, just because things appear on the horizon, it doesn't mean they have to be as bad as our imaginations might make them out to be. Yes, we have to do something, and perhaps the faster we move now the better it will be for those in the future. We have already proven that despite stubborn leadership and self interests, people actually can make things change.

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, we are reminded to keep our eye on the ball and not allow our faith to get sidetracked by such events. Biblical apocalyptic literature is meant to bring hope for the future, and to strengthen faith for the tormented in the present. At some point, the End will come all right, but God will be there for us to make the End a new beginning of God's Kingdom.

So hear the Good News of the Gospel: Don't fear the End, just seek to stand hour by hour, day by day in the conscious presence of the One from whom your life derives. Fear more than the End, so that when God does sweep in among us, we will be hard at work doing the mission that God has called us to do in this world, to tend to the earth and care for its people.

Our lesson today is not to be feared. Instead, it is helpful in warning us that things are going to happen, so don't be surprised when they do. But it also is a reminder that the thing to fear are not these events, but rather falling away from God because of such events. May your faith and hope be strengthened in these times of turmoil. Amen.

Hymn – My Lord, What a Morning (438)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=51E9b8DwpJw>

## Prayers

Eternal God, you hold firm amid the changes of this world. Hear us now as we pray for the church, the world, and everyone in need.

God our creator, you show us the path of life. Bless faithful people everywhere with humility as they extend compassion to those who have experienced harm in religious spaces. Cultivate healthy congregations that tell of and enact your reconciling love. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our constant, you love our universe from beginning to end. As the seasons change, protect animals that migrate and hibernate. Bring them safely to a sheltered place and a more abundant season. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our ruler, you write your law on human minds and hearts. Give wisdom to all elected leaders and officials to govern with insight and compassion. Make them mindful of the well-being of all people so that your world will flourish. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our stronghold, you are present amid disaster. We pray for those affected by natural disasters. Come to the aid of all survivors of earthquakes, famines, floods, hurricanes, and wildfires, and the first responders who support them. Calm their fear, supply their need, and be the solid ground beneath their feet. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our guide, you are greater than we can imagine. Surround congregations with your expansive inclusion. Be present in the midst of disagreements, differences, and questions. Unite people of diverse viewpoints in the love of Christ. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our beginning and our end, your beloved people shine like the brightness of the sky. We thank you for the lives of all who rest in your eternal mercy, from famous saints to the people we have loved. Assure us of your resurrection promise. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

God our hope and strength, we entrust to you all for whom we pray. Reign with us always, through Jesus Christ, our Savior, 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 – O God Beyond All Praising (880)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0\\_f7j0MXMdM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0_f7j0MXMdM)