

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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## Pastors:

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**November 28, 2021**

*The 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent*

## Coming Events

Nov 30

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

Dec 1

10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St.**

Dec 2

6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**

Dec 4

10 – 1 Christmas Kahvi Time **Regent St.**

Dec 5

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

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

**In our prayers** Ruth, Esme.

**Remembering** Raija Kankaanpää 90 yrs



Almighty God; you bring us hope in our times of grieving through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. May this hope be spread to all those who grieve today, especially the friends and family of Raija Kankaanpää, that they may find your comforting presence with them. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Opening Hymn – Creator of the Stars of Night (245)  
<https://youtu.be/C4VfZzQJwTY>

## Prayer of the Day

Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. By your merciful protection alert us to the threatening dangers of our sins, and redeem us for your life of justice, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

## Psalms 25:1 – 10

- <sup>1</sup> In you, LORD my God, I put my trust.
- <sup>2</sup> I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me.
- <sup>3</sup> No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause.
- <sup>4</sup> Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths.
- <sup>5</sup> Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long.
- <sup>6</sup> Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old.
- <sup>7</sup> Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good.
- <sup>8</sup> Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways.
- <sup>9</sup> He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.
- <sup>10</sup> All the ways of the LORD are loving and faithful toward those who keep the demands of his covenant.

## First Reading “**Jeremiah 33:14 – 16**”

**14** ‘The days are coming,’ declares the LORD, ‘when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah. **15** “In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David’s line; he will do what is just and right in the land. **16** In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety. This is the name by which it will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior.’

## Second Reading “**1 Thessalonians 3:9 – 13**”

**9** How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy we have in the presence of our God because of you? **10** Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. **11** Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you. **12** May the Lord make your love increase and overflow for each other and for everyone else, just as ours does for you.

**13** May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones.

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

## Gospel “**Luke 21:25 – 36**”

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*“There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. “Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. “Be careful, or your hearts will be weighed down with carousing, drunkenness and the anxieties of life, and that day will close on you suddenly like a trap. For it will come on all those who live on the face of the whole earth. Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to escape all that is about to happen, and that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”*

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

## Sermon

*By Rev. Charles Nolting  
“Are You Ready for Jesus?”*

You may have noticed that our gospel message for today concerns the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Jesus. And even though Jesus appears to tell us that it would happen soon, it’s quite apparent that believers have been waiting a long time. Of course, the nation of Israel also waited a long time for the messiah to come for the first time. The whole idea of the coming of a messiah goes all the way back to the Hebrew prophets who often mentioned such an event, with the intensity of the prophecy growing in direct proportion to the depth of despair the nation was in.

For the Old Testament Israelites, a messiah was seen to be a representative of God who would restore Israel to its former glory days like they had been under King David. Their military might would be able to hold off all invaders, and they would be a rich and contented nation, with a good economic outlook. It was kind of a MIGA movement, you know, Make Israel Great Again; which meant that it was not just a religious concept, but also political and cultural, since for the Jews, these were all tied closely together. They had very high hopes for this messiah.

Because the first Christians were Jews steeped in such an idea of what the messiah would be about, we can understand why many at first thought that John the Baptist, and then Jesus, were messiah material. Unfortunately, for those who had high hopes, neither of those two really fit into the mould that people had made for such a figure. Jesus did not inflict some sort of final judgement on the enemies of Israel, or have much of anything to say about returning the nation to its former glory. His teachings, life, and death left undone so much of what was expected.

Instead Jesus encouraged a new concept of what the messiah was to be about. The gospels tell how the messiah arrived in the person of Jesus – which wound up being more of a preparation of what to expect from the messiah - but the work was unfinished; to be completed with a second coming. There would be signs, such as we heard of today, that would announce when that coming was imminent.

Many of the early Christians were certain that Jesus would come again in their lifetime. The letters of Paul attest to that. Some of the members in the congregation in Thessalonica were so certain of the immanence of this coming that they quit working, and began sponging off other members for their livelihood; a move that compelled Paul to modify his understanding of the second coming, and decree that those who were unwilling to work should not eat either.

There has always been a lot of useless speculation about the timing of the second coming of Christ. Many have set dates and then made new calculations as those dates expired. Whole groups have been misled involving thousands of people regarding the event.

So how should we understand such apocalyptic passages such as we have before us today? Clearly they are not some sort of set schedule. But we are clearly told to always be alert and ready because the end comes for all of us at some point. There

is an expiration date on each of our lives. In spite of all the time that has passed since Jesus left, the end has come for billions already, and may well be the same for us also, which means that we should make the most of the time we have.

Even if we are arrogant enough to think we are indispensable, it can't hurt to note that we are surrounded by cemeteries filled with indispensable people. So Jesus today reminds us to stay alert. Be ready to leave at a moment's notice. The Advent reminder to be prepared is very prominent in today's gospel.

The way we prepare ourselves is to follow the lead of the one who came and redefined the term "messiah". Care about and for others. Do what we can to alleviate suffering wherever we see it. Put others ahead of yourself.

So often people understood the Old Testament writings as a way to only improve their own lives and they wound up looking inward. This, in part, was why they saw the messiah as someone who would stand up for their nation and their nation alone. This is why so many didn't recognize the messiah when he did show up for the first time. Jesus came to redefine not just what the messiah is about, but also to show us how to prepare for the grand arrival of the messiah.

You may have seen one of those novelty signs that reads: "*Jesus is coming, look busy*"? It is always helpful for us to remember that even if Jesus isn't coming today, or tomorrow, or even the next day, the probability is that we will be meeting him at some point in the future. And while it may be OK to look busy, it is most important to be faithful to the teachings and example of the messiah who has already come, and whose return we patiently await. Amen.

Hymn – O Come, O Come, Emmanuel (257)  
[https://youtu.be/7xtpJ4Q\\_Q-4](https://youtu.be/7xtpJ4Q_Q-4)

### Prayers

In this season of watching and waiting, let us pray for all people and places that yearn for God's presence.

God of presence and peace, strengthen your church around the globe to proclaim the message of your love coming to the world. Open our hearts to recognize your face in all people and in all of creation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of mighty redwoods and microscopic plants, fields and city parks, the wind and the waves, be a healing balm to our wounded planet. May we nurture what you have lovingly created. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of equity and compassion, bring righteousness and goodness to all peoples of the earth. Give a heart of discernment and integrity to leaders in our communities. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of comfort and care, be present with those who watch and wait. Come to all who await births, deaths, divorces, new unions, new jobs, retirements, healing, and life transitions of every kind. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of promises kept and new dreams awakened, shelter your people from destructive storms. We pray for those whose lives have been upended by natural disasters, for the work of Lutheran Disaster Response, Lutheran World Relief, and other relief organizations. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of companionship and community, we give you thanks for the saints who journeyed with us and now abide in you. Even in distress and uncertainty, make us confident that your promises endure forever. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of new life, you come among us in the places we least expect. Receive these prayers and those of our hearts, in the name of Jesus, 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 – Fling Wide the Door (259)  
<https://youtu.be/Mee4BQb-9qc>