

New Hope Lutheran Church

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January 16, 2022

2nd Sunday after Epiphany

Coming Events

Jan 18 7:00 English Bible Study **Zoom**
Contact Pastor Charlie if you
wish to participate

Jan 20 6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**
Contact Pastor Johanna if you
wish to participate

Jan 23 Sermons on our website nhlc.ca

In our prayers Ruth.

Due to the tightening of restrictions brought on by the increase COVID-19 risk, Bishop Pryse has recommended that congregations in the Eastern Synod immediately suspend all in-person worship services and gatherings.

New Hope Lutheran Church council agrees with this recommendation. Therefore, **we are suspending all in-person services and meetings until further notice.**

Opening Hymn – Now the Feast and Celebration (167)
<https://youtu.be/deKhWeKmdZ4>

Prayer of the Day

Lord God, source of every blessing, you showed forth your glory and led many to faith by the works of your Son, who brought gladness and salvation to his people. Transform us by the Spirit of his love, that we may find our life together in him, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalm 36:5 – 10

⁵ Your love, LORD, reaches to the heavens, your faithfulness to the skies.

⁶ Your righteousness is like the highest mountains, your justice like the great deep. You, LORD, preserve both people and animals.

⁷ How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings.

⁸ They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights.

⁹ For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

¹⁰ Continue your love to those who know you, your righteousness to the upright in heart.

First Reading “Isaiah 62:1 – 5”

1 For Zion’s sake I will not keep silent, for Jerusalem’s sake I will not remain quiet, till her vindication shines out like the dawn, her salvation like a blazing torch. **2** The nations will see your vindication, and all kings your glory; you will be called by a new name that the mouth of the LORD will bestow. **3** You will be a crown of splendor in the LORD’s hand, a royal diadem in the hand of your God. **4** No longer will they call you Deserted, or name your land Desolate. But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the LORD will take delight in you, and your land will be married. **5** As a young man marries a young woman, so will your Builder marry you; as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.

Second Reading “1 Corinthians 12:1 – 11”

1 Now about the gifts of the Spirit, brothers and sisters, I do not want you to be uninformed. **2** You know that when you were pagans, somehow or other you were influenced and led astray to mute idols. **3** Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, “Jesus is Lord,” except by the Holy Spirit. **4** There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. **5** There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. **6** There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. **7** Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. **8** To one there is given through the Spirit a message of wisdom, to another a message of

knowledge by means of the same Spirit, **9** to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by that one Spirit, **10** to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy, to another distinguishing between spirits, to another speaking in different kinds of tongues, and to still another the interpretation of tongues. **11** All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he distributes them to each one, just as he determines. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel “John 2:1 – 11”

Glory to you, O Lord.

On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there, and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.” “Woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My hour has not yet come.” His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.” Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water”; so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.” They did so, and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.” What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

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

Sermon

By Rev. Charles Nolting
“For The Common Good”

I suspect that we all have, at one time or another, wished that we could perform some kind of miracle. We may have wanted to heal a loved one, or perhaps even ourselves. We may have wanted to solve some kind of difficulty that we were experiencing. We may have desired some foresight into the future so that we might act in a way to bring about a desired conclusion. And, just perhaps, once in a while, we may have wished that we too could turn water into wine.

The unfortunate thing is that most of the times we wished we could perform a miracle it had something to do with benefitting ourselves. How often is our desire to heal, to resolve difficulties, and to see into the future for our own benefit? So one important message to

take away from Jesus first miracle is to notice how Jesus did it for the benefit of others. He certainly wasn't going to drink 100 liters of wine all on his own.

There were several others who would benefit from this first miracle of Jesus'. First of all, the hosts of the banquet would not be embarrassed by a shortage of wine. The guests of the banquet would benefit from a high quality drink to enjoy. And the disciples would benefit from a boost to their faith in what Jesus was capable of.

And then there was the commonality of the event. It was a wedding banquet that was running dry. Hardly ever in the Bible do we find a miracle that was so unremarkable. When you think about Moses parting the sea, or Elijah calling down fire from the sky - so powerful that it set ablaze a water-soaked sacrifice – well Jesus piddly little miracle kind of pales in comparison. If it hadn't been his very first miracle, it may never have been noted.

Something we can learn from this gospel lesson is that the best miracles benefit others rather than ourselves, and that they don't have to be all that remarkable. Miracles are usually the result of the gifts of the person performing them. Some have the gift of healing, others the gift of foresight, and yet others the gift of problem-solving. These are just a few of the gifts God bestows on people.

Quite often we are led to believe that the gifted are few in number because we only count the rare gifts, the ones that are rather unique, and appear to require some special talent. If we do that, we are forgetting that – like miracles – the gifts bestowed on us don't have to be all that remarkable to be considered gifts. I've been told for a long time that I'm a reasonably good public speaker which may not seem like a very big deal to me. Yet I recall from a university public speaking class a number of students who were so nervous speaking to a group that you could see knees visibly shaking which was detrimental to their performance.

1 Corinthians 12 speaks about God-given gifts and I certainly hope you are all aware that you are gifted in some way. We are often hindered however, when we feel that just because our gifts aren't in some way awesome that they don't count. When we look at our 2nd lesson and see the gifts mentioned there: wisdom, knowledge, faith, healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, and speaking or interpreting tongues – we may think that our gifts fall flat in comparison.

The truth though is that all gifts should be considered equal since this lesson, in verses 4-6 tells us that they all come from God. In our congregation, we need people with leadership skills for our new council. When we have in-person services we are in need of

people who are naturally welcoming to greet and usher. We need people with the gift of service to be sacristans and those with the gift of math skills to count and record offerings.

Once we are able to gather together in a somewhat normal fashion again, we will need people with the gifts of baking in order to enjoy the taste of fresh pulla once again. Even at this point in time, we are in need of people with the gifts of generosity to support our congregation through this time of uncertainty. These may seem to be mundane gifts to some, but they are no more mundane than Jesus turning water to wine for a common, back-country wedding banquet.

I have also known several people who have doubts about their giftedness. They may feel they have little or nothing to offer. But the first step in discovering your gifts is to take the time to seek them out by asking yourself a few questions. What do you love to do? What gives your life the feeling of purpose? What are some areas other people have told you that you excel? (Just as Jesus' mother saw his potential, others see potential in us.) Where or to what do you feel God is calling you?

It can also be helpful to just try out the things that come to mind. And remember that we may not always be good at first. From the time I was a child I had a hankering to be a writer. There is something about putting words to paper that appeals to me. So, as an adult I decided to spread my wings and entered some material in a national competition. It was rejected and so I gave up for a time. Maybe it wasn't for me. And yet today – after years of practice and study – I do a lot of writing, and, while I'm not winning any prizes, I understand it to be a gift that not everyone has.

Lastly, remember that while we may use our gifts for our own benefits, we should consider how we can use them for the common good, as mentioned in verse 7 of our 2nd lesson. Have you ever thought of your gifts being a miracle for someone else? As we saw from the gospel, miracles don't have to be tremendous, and they are for the good of others. So God asks us to use our gifts for the "common good", in order that all can benefit from our gifts just as we benefit from the gifts of others. Together we can move forward by pooling our gifts toward the glory of God. Amen.

Hymn – Jesus, Come! For We Invite You (312)
<https://youtu.be/LvnrtCvT8VA>

Prayers

The Spirit of the Lord is poured out upon us in abundance; so we are bold to pray for the church, the world, and all that God has made.

By your Spirit, activate within your church gifts of faith, healing, and prophecy. Unite those who profess your name across congregations, denominations, and geographic boundaries. Open our hearts to recognize and celebrate surprising miracles. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your creation reflects your generosity. Bless farmers, migrant farmworkers, orchard-keepers, ranchers, and all who tend the abundance of the land. Protect food and water sources from destruction, that all can eat and drink and be satisfied. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

By your Spirit, grant wisdom, knowledge, and discernment to those who hold leadership positions at any level. Direct policymakers toward compassionate decisions that build up safe and just communities. Lead all authorities in seeking and serving the common good. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

As Jesus provided generously in a moment of need, provide generous gifts of healing for those in need this day. Provide abundantly for all who are hungry or thirsty, all seeking shelter, and all who seek peace. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You see us for who we are and you delight in us. Embrace those struggling with self-worth, wrestling with self-identity, or facing significant life transition. Remind us that nothing can separate us from your love. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You bless us through the spiritual gifts of the saints who have gone before us. We give thanks for the life of Martin Luther King Jr. and all who have modeled the way of courageous faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Since we have such great hope in your promises, O God, we lift these and all our prayers to you in confidence and faith; 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 – Songs of Thankfulness and Praise (310)
<https://youtu.be/vv8-aqd49oQ>