

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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## Pastors:

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*January 30, 2022*

*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Epiphany*

## Coming Events

**All in-person services and meetings are suspended until further notice.**

Feb 1 7:00 English Bible Study **Zoom**  
Contact Pastor Charlie if you wish to participate

Feb 3 6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**  
Contact Pastor Johanna if you wish to participate

Feb 6 Sermons on our website [nhlc.ca](http://nhlc.ca)

**In our prayers** Ruth.

**Remembering** Pertti Puro 65 yrs



We light a candle today for Pertti Puro Lord, and pray that you will be with their family and friends in this time. Comfort them with your presence, guide them with your Holy Word, and may they feel your loving arms around them. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Opening Hymn – Christ Be Our Light (715)  
<https://youtu.be/qibAAo0JiEQ>

## Prayer of the Day

Almighty and ever-living God, increase in us the gifts of faith, hope, and love; and that we may obtain what you promise, make us love what you command, through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## Psalms 71:1 – 6

- <sup>1</sup> In you, LORD, I have taken refuge; let me never be put to shame.
- <sup>2</sup> In your righteousness, rescue me and deliver me; turn your ear to me and save me.
- <sup>3</sup> Be my rock of refuge, to which I can always go; give the command to save me, for you are my rock and my fortress.
- <sup>4</sup> Deliver me, my God, from the hand of the wicked, from the grasp of those who are evil and cruel.
- <sup>5</sup> For you have been my hope, Sovereign LORD, my confidence since my youth.
- <sup>6</sup> From birth I have relied on you; you brought me forth from my mother's womb. I will ever praise you.

## First Reading “**Jeremiah 1:4 – 10**”

**4** The word of the LORD came to me, saying, **5** “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.” **6** “Alas, Sovereign LORD,” I said, “I do not know how to speak; I am too young.” **7** But the LORD said to me, “Do not say, ‘I am too young.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you. **8** Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you,” declares the LORD. **9** Then the LORD reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, “I have put my words in your mouth. **10** See, today I appoint you over nations and kingdoms to uproot and tear down, to destroy and overthrow, to build and to plant.”

## Second Reading “**1 Corinthians 13:1 – 13**”

**1** If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. **2** If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. **3** If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. **4** Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. **5** It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. **6** Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. **7** It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. **8** Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part, **10** but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears. **11** When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put the ways of childhood behind me. **12** For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. **13** And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

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

## Gospel “**Luke 4:21 – 30**”

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn't this Joseph's son?” they asked. Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’” “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. I assure you that*

*there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian." All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.*  
*The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.***

### **Sermon**

*By Rev. Charles Nolting  
"Stunned Disbelief"*

Back in Jesus day, Nazareth was just a little village on a hillside. Since then of course, the population has grown up into the current city of Nazareth, taking up several hills. Above the original village site there is a park located which overlooks a massive valley. This park land has been set aside as the place thought to be the location where the villagers of Nazareth attempted to throw Jesus off a cliff.

And it is quite a cliff! From the top you look down on the immense valley of Jezreel with its variety of crops growing in the fields. You can see a highway that heads towards the city and the vehicles on that road look rather small. The view is magnificent because you are up so high in the air.

But being up there makes you question just why the villagers of Jesus' day thought it would be appropriate to just toss someone off that cliff to injure, if not actually kill the victim. What had he done that was so horrible to deserve such a punishment?

If you casually read today's gospel lesson, it would appear that he had been somewhat insulting to the

people of his hometown, although from our perspective their response seems a tad overblown. But because things have changed a lot in our day, we need to remember that long ago, in faraway little communities, it didn't always take much for the citizenry to execute the death sentence.

There is more to it than that though. What Jesus did was more than a simple insult. The situation had begun well (as we read in last Sunday's gospel lesson), with Jesus being invited to read from the prophet Isaiah and comment on his choice of verses. He had talked about how he had been sent to proclaim good news to the poor, freedom for prisoners, sight for the blind, and set the oppressed free. It made for a good sermon, and we can imagine the room was filled with enthusiasm and pride in their native son.

But then Jesus goes and ruins it all. Essentially he tells them: "*this isn't about you. It's about those outside of our religious domain whom we should be concerned about, just as the prophets Elijah and Elisha were sent to assist those outside of their religious circles.*" In other words, unless you are doing the same for those you consider sinners, you aren't pleasing God at all.

Is it possible we can all imagine the look of stunned disbelief on the faces of those in the synagogue that day? They had come expecting a good sermon, and maybe a couple of miracles tailored especially for the hometown crowd. They may have also expected a bit of favoritism since the messenger was considered one of their own. What they absolutely didn't expect was to be told that they essentially weren't living up to God's expectations.

In a society that values its relationship to God above all else, most any preaching manual may tell you that it is rarely a good idea to humiliate the congregation at that level.

It's a newbie mistake, and Jesus – having only recently begun his ministry – might be excused due to his lack

of experience. In thinking that however, we may have forgotten that at this point in his life, Jesus was very well aware of what he was saying and how he was saying it. He did know what he was doing, even performing a miracle often overlooked – that of escaping the mob who were attempting to toss him off a cliff.

So how well does that same insulting, humiliating message resonate with us today? Are we offended by it, or is it a message of good news for us? Are we eager to assist others regardless of who they are, where they came from, or what their past involves? Or would we rather look the other way, doing loving deeds only for those we love?

Jesus words to us today may still feel a bit insulting if we insist on simply looking after ourselves and others who think only as we do. We don't like being told that the way we live our lives may not be all that pleasing to God. In these times, most people resent being given suggestions as to how they might better live their lives.

But one thing Jesus does offer to each of us is the chance to change, the chance to reach out to others we may have ignored or avoided. If we only see Jesus words as the villagers did - as words of condemnation - we may feel resentment. However, if we see Jesus words as guidance for future behavior, we may actually catch a glimpse of salvation.

Amen.

Hymn – Although I Speak with Angel's Tongue (644)  
<https://youtu.be/8k3qcv4sb5Q>

### **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.

Guide your church in the ways of faith, hope, and love. Cultivate ministries and communities of compassion

that bear witness to your enduring presence among us.  
God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Teach us to live in humility on the earth. Curb arrogance that leads to destruction of natural resources and disregard for future generations. Inspire the work of scientists who urge us to live in harmony with your creation. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You are the refuge of all who seek hope and freedom. Accompany immigrants, refugees, and asylum seekers who cross borders to find safety and opportunity. Embolden leaders to draft compassionate policies on behalf of migrants and those who assist them. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Love bears, believes, hopes, and endures all things. Comfort with your love all who are lonely, fearful, or broken-hearted. Sustain the hope of all those who suffer in body or spirit. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your grace falls upon young and old alike. Bless the gifts of children in this congregation and in this community. Give us humble hearts to follow their leadership. Inspire us with their laughter, their insight, and their curiosity. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We praise you for those who have gone before us and now see you face to face. Abide with us in this mortal life until we rest in the arms of your never-ending love. 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 – Go, My Children, With My Blessing (543)  
<https://youtu.be/vNyofVz24vo>