

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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## Pastors:

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*February 6, 2022*

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

## Coming Events

Feb 7 1:00 Worship & Music **Zoom**

Feb 8 7:00 English Bible Study **Zoom**  
Contact Pastor Charlie if you wish to participate

Feb 9 6:30 Council meeting **zoom**

Feb 10 6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**  
Contact Pastor Johanna if you wish to participate

Feb 13 Sermons on our website [nhlc.ca](http://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 – Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty!  
(413) [https://youtu.be/zzM9P\\_Gqw-s](https://youtu.be/zzM9P_Gqw-s)

## Prayer of the Day

Most holy God, the earth is filled with your glory, and before you angels and saints stand in awe. Enlarge our vision to see your power at work in the world, and by your grace make us heralds of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## Psalm 138

<sup>1</sup> I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; before the “gods” I will sing your praise.

<sup>2</sup> I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your unfailing love and your faithfulness, for you have so exalted your solemn decree that it surpasses your fame.

<sup>3</sup> When I called, you answered me; you greatly emboldened me.

<sup>4</sup> May all the kings of the earth praise you, LORD, when they hear what you have decreed.

<sup>5</sup> May they sing of the ways of the LORD, for the glory of the LORD is great.

<sup>6</sup> Though the LORD is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly; though lofty, he sees them from afar.

<sup>7</sup> Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes; with your right hand you save me.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD will vindicate me; your love, LORD, endures forever— do not abandon the works of your hands.

## First Reading “Isaiah 6:1 – 8”

<sup>1</sup> In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. <sup>3</sup> And they were calling to one another: “Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory.” <sup>4</sup> At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the

temple was filled with smoke. <sup>5</sup> “Woe to me!” I cried. “I am ruined! For I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips, and my eyes have seen the King, the LORD Almighty.” <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. <sup>7</sup> With it he touched my mouth and said, “See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for.” <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I. Send me!”

## Second Reading “1 Corinthians 15:1 – 11”

<sup>1</sup> Now, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you, which you received and on which you have taken your stand. <sup>2</sup> By this gospel you are saved, if you hold firmly to the word I preached to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain. <sup>3</sup> For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup> that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup> and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. <sup>6</sup> After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup> Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, <sup>8</sup> and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born. <sup>9</sup> For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. <sup>10</sup> But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them—yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. <sup>11</sup> Whether, then, it is I or they, this is what we preach, and this is what you believed. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

## Gospel “Luke 5:1 – 11”

### **Glory to you, O Lord.**

*One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and*

*listening to the word of God. He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat. When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch." Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink. When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*

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

## **Sermon**

*By Rev. Charles Nolting  
"Here I am! Send Me!"*

Just in case you didn't catch on from some of our lessons, our theme for today is about being called to do the Lord's work. And one of the first things we can take away from our 1<sup>st</sup> and gospel lessons is that God doesn't appear all that choosy about who is being called.

While we are never explicitly told what he did, academics have gleaned that the prophet Isaiah may well have been an intellectual in the city of Jerusalem, possibly even being one of the elites in that city. And yet Isaiah feels that he is totally unworthy of being

called, not only because he has come to the realization that he himself is unclean, but also because he lives among people who are considered unclean. They are all a bunch of sinners. They have all in some way chosen to ignore God's word. And yet in spite of the great amount of sin, in his vision Isaiah is cleansed and then volunteers to be the voice of God, called to speak a message of condemnation for the actions of those he may well have considered his friends and neighbors.

And then, in our gospel, Jesus approaches a group of fishermen. Now fishermen weren't known for their immense theological knowledge, or their closeness to God, or even their holy demeanor. No, they were usually a rough bunch, working a physically demanding job, and prone to taking risks on the water that most of us would choose to avoid. They seem to be an odd choice for the son of God to ask to be his followers.

So in these lessons, people appear to be chosen for *who* they are rather than *what* they are. It seems that God bypasses looking at what is apparent on the outside, instead looking deep into a person's soul to gauge what a person might be called to. How one may dress, levels of education, and even social standing make little difference to God, perhaps because such things can change in time and with experience. God appears to be after our essence when calling us to something – meaning that any of us faithful believers could get a calling at any time.

I often get the sense that a hinderance to following our calling is found in how we define what a calling is. Unfortunately, it would appear that most people believe God only calls people to be pastors, or missionaries, or some other occupation that requires working on Sundays. And yet the Bible shows how all believers are called to some kind of ministry in their local setting or in service to the wider church.

While a person like St. Paul was called to serve the wider church as he travelled and set up congregations, he also had assistants to help him in that endeavor,

most notably Silas and Timothy among the others he mentions. Similar to Isaiah, Paul also felt unworthy of his calling as he had been busy zealously persecuting Christians before his conversion. And yet, he still took up his calling.

The Bible also tells of many who felt called to serve in a more local setting, especially in the book of Acts. Priscilla and Aquila were a married couple who made tents together with Paul as their side business in Corinth. They had been part of a Jewish expulsion from Rome and became some of Paul's greatest supporters taking on major positions in that congregation. In Acts, we also come across Lydia, a business woman who felt called to financially support the congregation. These, among many others, are all callings. God calls people from a variety of positions to take on the wide variety of work needed to spread the gospel.

So what might you feel called to do? In our congregation we are usually in need of volunteers for worship, for positions of authority (like being on council), for reaching out to others, for hospitality, and even for technical expertise. While we are currently limited by pandemic restrictions, we still have a need for volunteers. We have a need for people who will respond like Isaiah: "*Here I am. Send me!*"

I realize that, as a normal human reaction, we normally wouldn't volunteer without some kind of obvious reward. We have been trained by the world to get something for our efforts, and we often choose to do something based on knowing the reward before we even begin. How often do we have to be nudged into volunteering? And how often is our initial response something along the lines of: "*If I have to, I suppose I could?*"

But this is where a calling is something different from simply volunteering because one feels pushed into it. A calling first takes into account your talents and gifts. It seeks out something about who you are rather than

what you are. It can result in personal growth by challenging us to be more than we currently are.

And once we accept a call, that is when we discover rewards we hadn't thought of before. Following a calling can give us:

- A sense of purpose
- A sense of community
- Increased social skills
- Improvement to our self esteem
- A chance to learn valuable skills
- Some fun in our lives, making us happier by lessening stress and anxiety
- The opportunity to get out of our comfort zone and increase critical thinking skills
- The chance to discover something you are passionate about

It may surprise you to discover that following a calling through volunteering is actually something experts have suggested to help fight off pandemic fatigue. It rewards your brain rather than allowing it to wallow in self-pity.

It must have been difficult for the fishermen to follow Jesus after just getting a huge catch of fish. They probably had a week's worth of income right there. Why not hire Jesus to go out with them once a week and get on with life? The thing is that they obviously felt a need to move on to something more challenging, just as Isaiah did. We have all been made worthy with God so why not consider our callings and see how God can use your talents to bring others to him? Amen.

Hymn – You Have Come Down to the Lakeshore (817)  
<https://youtu.be/Kdsab4mm4nl>

## 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.

Equip your church to proclaim the good news that we have first received: the forgiveness and grace shown to us through Jesus Christ. Send us out as apostles, sharing the hope of your salvation with a waiting world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Holy are you, O God of hosts. Heaven and earth are filled with your glory. Reveal your splendor in fiery sunsets and in deep blue twilights. Teach us to recognize you in the beauty of our natural world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Soften the hearts of rulers and governments that they perceive and tend to the needs of their people. Remove corruption and the impulse toward violence. Protect first responders and military personnel who risk their lives in service of others. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Your steadfast love endures forever; do not abandon those who look to you for hope and healing. Bless doctors, nurses, social workers, therapists, and all caregivers. Draw near to those who are scared, sick, or in pain. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

The disciples received help from partners as they brought in an abundant catch of fish. So strengthen this congregation's partnerships with community organizations and ministries. Multiply our shared efforts and bring joy to our relationships. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for our ancestors in faith who boldly answered your call. By their example give us courage to live in faith and to proclaim your mercy until the day that you gather us into your glory. 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 – Will You Come and Follow (798)  
<https://youtu.be/S-Bq1YtpQL8>