

New Hope Lutheran Church

189 Regent St.
Sudbury, Ontario
P3C 4C4

705-673-2933
email: office@nhlc.ca
website: nhlc.ca

face book: New Hope Lutheran Church
you tube: New Hope Lutheran Church Sudbury

Pastors:

Rev. Charles Nolting
phone: 705-920-3573 email: pcn@nhlc.ca

Rev. Johanna Porkola
phone: 705-688-6284 email: pjp@nhlc.ca

February 13, 2022

6th Sunday after Epiphany

Coming Events

Feb 15 7:00 English Bible Study **Zoom**
Contact Pastor Charlie if you wish to participate

Feb 17 6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**
Contact Pastor Johanna if you wish to participate

Feb 20 10:00 Messu † **Voima Hall**
2:00 English Worship † **Regent St**

In our prayers Ruth, Marilyn.

Welcome!!!

Our in-person worship services will resume on February 20, 2022.

Please note that for the Finnish services at Finlandia Village, travel through the nursing home (Hoivakoti) is not possible at this time.

Opening Hymn – We Come to the Hungry Feast - (479)
<https://youtu.be/YxStE5D7Vmg>

Prayer of the Day

Living God, in Christ you make all things new. Transform the poverty of our nature by the riches of your grace, and in the renewal of our lives make known your glory, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalms 1

- ¹ Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.
⁴ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.
⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
⁶ For the LORD watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

First Reading “**Jeremiah 17:5 – 10**”

5 This is what the LORD says: “Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who draws strength from mere flesh and whose heart turns away from the LORD. **6** That person will be like a bush in the wastelands; they will not see prosperity when it comes. They will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives. **7** “But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. **8** They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.” **9** The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? **10** “I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to

reward each person according to their conduct, according to what their deeds deserve.”

Second Reading “**1 Corinthians 15:12 – 20**”

12 But if it is preached that Christ has been raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? **13** If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. **14** And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith. **15** More than that, we are then found to be false witnesses about God, for we have testified about God that he raised Christ from the dead. But he did not raise him if in fact the dead are not raised. **16** For if the dead are not raised, then Christ has not been raised either. **17** And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. **18** Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. **19** If only for this life we have hope in Christ, we are of all people most to be pitied. **20** But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep.

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

Gospel “**Luke 6:17 – 26**”

Glory to you, O Lord.

He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon, who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured, and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all. Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man. “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how

their ancestors treated the prophets. “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep. Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.

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

Sermon

By Rev. Charles Nolting

“Beatitudes: The Other Version”

Today is the Sixth Sunday After Epiphany. Now, depending on how the timing of Easter Sunday works out, we don't always get to celebrate a Sixth Sunday After Epiphany. What that means for us this year is that we encounter a gospel that is only presented to us occasionally. I suspect that many of you may feel that is nonsense, as we have heard these verses so many times that we even have a name for them; the Beatitudes.

And yes, they are the Beatitudes, but they are not the Beatitudes we normally hear. Usually we hear the Beatitudes from the gospel of Matthew, but today we are exposed to the version found in Luke's gospel. And right from the beginning there are clues that things are a little bit different. The gathering happens on “a level place”, rather than the heights of a mountain with its expansive view of the Sea of Galilee, the dunes of the Gerasenes on one side, the vineyards of Galilee on the other. We also find in this lesson the oddity of people being eager to touch Jesus because of the power emanating from him.

These however, are minor differences compared to what Jesus has to say. In Luke there is a notable difference in that Jesus specifically preaches in favor of the poor and outcast of society. Even his opening line is different: Luke begins with “*Blessed are you who are*

poor,...”, rather than the better known line from Matthew: “*Blessed are the poor in spirit...*” And then Luke emphasizes how much God cares for the poor and outcast by continuing on to discredit those who feel that wealth and power are signs of God's blessing – something that Matthew's gospel avoids in the beatitudes.

The reason for this may well be due to the audience each author was writing for. It would appear that Luke's version is aiming to drum into his readers that life is about the choices we make, especially those who have any wealth. And while we may get the feeling that Luke is berating the wealthy with his “*woe to you*” phrases, they might also be translated as “*you will suffer grief*” due to the choices being made.

As our zoom Bible study group discovered this past week in the book of Amos, wealth can have the unfortunate side effect of making people feel totally self-sufficient, as though they have no need of anybody or anything, including God and God's word. Wealth can drive people to feeling that other humans are somehow worth less, and even worthless. Wealth can lead to injustices festering in a social system; from bribes, to “favors”, to the purchase of power over others. Those with wealth have a wider variety of choices that can be made in life, and when they choose poorly, they may feel they have gained in the short term, but often with long-term consequences for the themselves, as well as the wider society.

To understand Jesus' viewpoint, it may help us to remember that Jesus grew up in relative poverty. His early family life included being refugees in Egypt after Herod's decree to slaughter the children. Once back in Nazareth, they lived a meager existence. While the family may never have starved, they still lived a hand to mouth existence, which may be why Jesus so easily noted in many places how poverty can create qualities in people that God is pleased with, such as humility.

We might want to note that while Jesus didn't outright condemn wealth; he noted how the wealthy often encase themselves in such a hard shell of self-sufficiency that they are no longer sensitive to the spiritual values in life. The rich are no longer eager to receive the gifts of God because they think they already have everything worth desiring. There is no hunger for the invisible because their visible possessions seem to be enough. So, “*woe to you*” isn't necessarily about what God might do to the wealthy, but rather what harm the wealthy can do to themselves due to poor choices being made.

I realize you might be wondering where this is going as few, if any, of us consider ourselves wealthy. While I'm not aware of anyone in the congregation building rockets for the space tourism industry, or placing orders for mega-yachts so large that existing bridges have to be dismantled, we have to keep in mind that – even if we don't compare ourselves with the 2nd or 3rd world – God does. One choice we often make is to compare ourselves to the thousands who have more than we do and we feel poor in comparison; as if we don't have enough. In God's eyes however, we are compared to the billions of people who have much less than we do, and if we were to do the same, we might catch a glimpse of how rich we actually are.

So, in some ways, these verses are very much for us. They encourage us to make wise choices regarding the wealth we do have, regardless of how much or little it is. One way to help understand how wealthy we are, and how blessed we are, is to tithe, to take a percentage of our income and dedicate it to God. It amazes many people when they find they can still easily get by on 5% less, or even a greater amount. (The Old Testament tithe by the way, was 10%.)

Something that often trips people up when a conversation turns to giving to God is that we want to see something in exchange for our offering. We expect

we should receive some sort of goods or services in return. It's a worldly attitude we choose to have that when you give, you get, which totally takes away any hint of thankfulness that we have been richly blessed by God. Along with people from other times in history, we may choose to practice the view that we can somehow buy God's love.

The strange thing is that we don't choose whether or not God will love us. God already made that decision before we were even created and the answer is a resounding "YES!", God does indeed love us. So what can we choose to do that will reflect our immense gratitude for that love?
Amen.

Hymn – Let Streams of Living Justice - (710)
<https://youtu.be/1nrKee57i6s>

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.

Blessed are those whose trust is in you. Strengthen the faith of those who profess your name and bring reassurance to those who doubt or fear. Through your church speak continued blessing into the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Those who trust in you are like trees planted by streams of water. Bless fruit trees around the world with an abundant harvest. Protect rainforests from destruction. Restore land that has eroded after deforestation. Resurrect woodlands after forest fires. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Search the hearts of those who govern, that they lead with humility. Inspire leaders to collaborate on policies that protect people and the planet. Sustain truth-tellers and social movements that challenge society to become more honest and just. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Send your blessings of mercy upon those who long for consolation. Tend to those struggling with poverty, unemployment, or uncertainty. Provide for all who are hungry. Console those who face persecution. Grant peace to all who suffer. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Renew this congregation in our shared mission. As we plan and dream for the future you are preparing, inspire us by the examples of Martin Luther and all the reformers. Bless new projects and new ministry partnerships. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Christ is raised from the dead, and so we cling to the hope of the resurrection. We praise you for the lives of the saints who lived and died in the hope of eternal life with you. 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 – Cantic of the Turning - (723)
https://youtu.be/A7fTuH_0agE