

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

March 13, 2022

The 2nd Sunday in Lent

Coming Events

- Mar 15 7:00 English Bible Study **Zoom**
Mar 16 10 - 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St**
6:30 Finnish Lenten Service **Regent St**
(downstairs)
6:30 English Lenten Service **Regent St**
(upstairs)
Mar 17 6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**
Mar 20 10:00 Messu † **Voima Hall**
2:00 English Worship † **Regent St**
3:00 Annual Meeting **Regent St & Voima**
Mar 22 7:00 English Bible Study **Zoom**

In our prayers Ruth, Marilyn.

Remembering Eeva Kämäräinen 91 yrs
Martti Luoma 76 yrs



Mighty, gracious, compassionate Lord, we pray today for the families of Eeva and Martti, that you would comfort them in their grief, guide them in their sorrow, and give them your peace. We pray this in the name of Jesus our Lord and Savior. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

God of the covenant, in the mystery of the cross you promise everlasting life to the world. Gather all peoples into your arms, and shelter us with your mercy, that we may rejoice in the life we share in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm 27

- ¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation— whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life— of whom shall I be afraid?
² When the wicked advance against me to devour me, it is my enemies and my foes who will stumble and fall.
³ Though an army besiege me, my heart will not fear; though war break out against me, even then I will be confident.
⁴ One thing I ask from the LORD, this only do I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze on the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple.
⁵ For in the day of trouble he will keep me safe in his dwelling; he will hide me in the shelter of his sacred tent and set me high upon a rock
⁶ Then my head will be exalted above the enemies who surround me; at his sacred tent I will sacrifice with shouts of joy; I will sing and make music to the LORD.
⁷ Hear my voice when I call, LORD; be merciful to me and answer me.
⁸ My heart says of you, “Seek his face!” Your face, LORD, I will seek.
⁹ Do not hide your face from me, do not turn your servant away in anger; you have been my helper. Do not reject me or forsake me, God my Savior.
¹⁰ Though my father and mother forsake me, the LORD will receive me.
¹¹ Teach me your way, LORD; lead me in a straight path because of my oppressors.
¹² Do not turn me over to the desire of my foes, for false

witnesses rise up against me, spouting malicious accusations.

- ¹³ I remain confident of this: I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.
¹⁴ Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD.

First Reading “**Genesis 15:1 – 12, 17 – 18**”

1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.” **2** But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” **3** And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.” **4** Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son who is your own flesh and blood will be your heir.” **5** He took him outside and said, “Look up at the sky and count the stars—if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.” **6** Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. **7** He also said to him, “I am the LORD, who brought you out of Ur of the Chaldeans to give you this land to take possession of it.” **8** But Abram said, “Sovereign LORD, how can I know that I will gain possession of it?” **9** So the LORD said to him, “Bring me a heifer, a goat and a ram, each three years old, along with a dove and a young pigeon.” **10** Abram brought all these to him, cut them in two and arranged the halves opposite each other; the birds, however, he did not cut in half. **11** Then birds of prey came down on the carcasses, but Abram drove them away. **12** As the sun was setting, Abram fell into a deep sleep, and a thick and dreadful darkness came over him.

17 When the sun had set and darkness had fallen, a smoking firepot with a blazing torch appeared and passed between the pieces. **18** On that day the LORD made a covenant with Abram and said, “To your

descendants I give this land, from the Wadi of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates.

Second Reading “Philippians 3:17 – 4:1”

17 Join together in following my example, brothers and sisters, and just as you have us as a model, keep your eyes on those who live as we do. **18** For, as I have often told you before and now tell you again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. **19** Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is set on earthly things. **20** But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, **21** who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.

4:1 Therefore, my brothers and sisters, you whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, stand firm in the Lord in this way, dear friends!

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

Gospel “Luke 13:31 – 35”

Glory to you, O Lord.

At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said to him, “Leave this place and go somewhere else. Herod wants to kill you.” He replied, “Go tell that fox, ‘I will keep on driving out demons and healing people today and tomorrow, and on the third day I will reach my goal.’ In any case, I must press on today and tomorrow and the next day—for surely no prophet can die outside Jerusalem! “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing. Look, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, ‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’”

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

Sermon

*By Rev. Charles Nolting
“Performance Evaluations”*

Have you ever heard of something called a “performance evaluation? In a nutshell, a performance evaluation is a kind of a review of how things are going for an employee regarding just what kind of a worker they are. When finished, it describes the positive and negative aspects of a worker, which can be reviewed by those higher up.

Now, we probably realize that not all performance evaluations are glowing reports. Here’s just a couple of examples of some actual performance evaluations:

- Since my last report, he has reached rock bottom and has started to dig.
- This employee should go far - and the sooner he starts, the better.
- This employee is depriving a village somewhere of an idiot.

You get the idea? In the gospel lesson today, Jesus appears to be giving a “performance evaluation” on the city of Jerusalem; and it’s not very impressive either. He laments about how lost they are, and how much he would like to help them along, yet time and time again they refuse.

And apparently this isn’t a performance evaluation for the city only in Jesus day, but rather an evaluation of how they have been doing for most of their history. When prophets were sent to tell them how God would like to see things done, they were rejected and even killed. The people don’t get it, and hardly ever have. They can’t seem to grasp what God has in mind for them. Even so, Jesus still wants to take them under his wing; so to speak. He honestly, truly, longs to bring them into the fold.

But the people of Jerusalem aren’t the only ones who might suffer from a poor evaluation. Let’s consider a performance evaluation for the 12 apostles. Peter is

remembered for his infamous denial of Jesus, and wanting him to be safe, encouraging Jesus to run away from the cross. James and John argued over who could sit beside Jesus in glory. Thomas doubted the resurrection. Judas thought it was fine to sell Jesus out. The others argued over who was the greatest among them. What sort of things might Jesus have said for some of their “performance evaluations”? “*The employee fails to grasp the basic concepts of what we do here?*”

They’re not very impressive, are they? And yet, in spite of their lack of understanding, we never have Jesus recorded as saying anything nasty about them. Even when Jesus chided them about their lack of faith and foresight, he did it in a very honest, well-meaning way similar to the words used to describe Jerusalem. Rather than speaking out with a sense of angry frustration, Jesus spoke out of love and a sense that there is still a chance at redemption – if only people would step back from worldly ways and give him a chance.

Jesus probably could have used some nasty performance evaluation comments, considering that the disciples seemed to have little clue as to who Jesus was or what he was really about. From our perspective – where we have wonderful hindsight – they might look laughable. How could they not know what they had going for them with Jesus right there in front of them? How could they not see the Son of God, the messiah, the savior?

On the other hand, we had better not get too smug. The disciples did, in time, come to understand the gospel mission so well that they gave their lives for it, yet how often do we - who know so much due to hindsight - still fall dreadfully short of the disciples? So if we were given one, what would our performance evaluation say? *Some people drink from the Fountain Of Knowledge; but we only gargled?* Scary thought isn’t it? What then might help upgrade our performance

evaluation? To find this we need to look to scripture and what it says. We need to chat with the boss about it as well. Is it really that hard?

Well it can be if we let it. We are bombarded so much, on a daily basis, by messages that encourage us to spend our time hunting for all the joys this earth can provide. We are encouraged to have all things. We are encouraged to experience all things. We are encouraged to be all kinds of things. The world tells us to look after our self interests first and forget about others.

It may help to realize that while there is so much in the world to enjoy, not all of it is good for us, nor is it the main thing that we are to try to attain. The joys of earth are a sideline to what we are supposed to be doing, which is to serve God in any way we can. If God doesn't come first and foremost in our lives, then our performance evaluation at the end of the day may not look too good.

The good news is that this can all change. As we see from Jesus comments to his disciples, and even the city of Jerusalem, God actually wants to take us under his wing. God wants us to do better, and be better. God wants to give us every chance for improvement; because God cares so deeply for us. But in order for us to get to a place where we can improve, we have to act by stepping back, taking a good hard look at ourselves, considering how we improve, and moving towards that goal. It can mean letting go of some personal desires so that we can move ahead as one body – the body of Christ.

In short, we need to see ourselves as God might see us. Lent offers us that opportunity. So, this Lenten season, take the time to consider what you would like to see on your own spiritual performance evaluation – and work towards that. Amen.

Prayers

Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers
You gather the church into a community of mercy and grace. Unify Christians around the globe in efforts to proclaim good news even in the face of opposition and to protect those whose lives are imperiled by the gospel. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You create the entire universe and call it good. Hinder those who would cause further destruction to our planet's fragile ecosystems, and augment the calls of those who advocate for thoughtful stewardship of the earth's resources. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You raise up leaders committed to love and justice. Nurture in those who govern by giving them patience to receive criticism, openness to new ideas, and courage to change course when needed for the sake of the common good. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You hear us when we cry to you. Attend to those expecting a child, and console those who have experienced miscarriage. Comfort all enduring post-traumatic stress. Shield those endangered by domestic violence. Uphold those who are ill or grieving. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We pray for those who are actively seeking work and jobs. Be with them in their search and give them comfort and hope for the future. Guide them in their decision making so that they might be led to discover a calling of your will, and that they may find fulfillment and joy in their labors. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

You welcome us into your heavenly realm. We give thanks for those whose labors on earth are ended and who now rest with you. On the final day, gather all of us, with them, in your loving arms. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Accept the prayers we bring, O God, on behalf of a world in need, for the sake of Jesus Christ, 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.**