

New Hope Lutheran Church

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March 20, 2022

The 3rd Sunday in Lent

Coming Events

Mar 22	1:30	Finnish Bible Study Impola Room
	7:00	English Bible Study Zoom
Mar 23	10 - 1	Kahvi Time Regent St
	6:30	Finnish Lenten Service Regent St (downstairs)
	6:30	English Lenten Service Regent St (upstairs)
Mar 24	6:30	Finnish Bible Study Zoom
Mar 27	10:00	Messu † Voima Hall
	2:00	English Worship Regent St

In our prayers Ruth, Marilyn.

Prayer of the Day

Eternal God, your kingdom has broken into our troubled world through the life, death, and resurrection of your Son. Help us to hear your word and obey it, and bring your saving love to fruition in our lives; we pray through Jesus Christ, our savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalms 63:1 – 8

- ¹ You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water.
- ² I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.
- ³ Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.
- ⁴ I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.
- ⁵ I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
- ⁶ On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.
- ⁷ Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.
- ⁸ I cling to you; your right hand upholds me.

First Reading “**Isaiah 55:1 – 9**”

1 “Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. **2** Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen, listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare. **3** Give ear and come to me; listen, that you may live. I will make an everlasting covenant with you, my faithful love promised to David. **4** See, I have made him a witness to the peoples, a ruler and commander of the peoples. **5** Surely you will summon nations you know not, and nations you do not know will come running to you, because of the LORD your God,

the Holy One of Israel, for he has endowed you with splendor.” **6** Seek the LORD while he may be found; call on him while he is near. **7** Let the wicked forsake their ways and the unrighteous their thoughts. Let them turn to the LORD, and he will have mercy on them, and to our God, for he will freely pardon. **8** “For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,” declares the LORD. **9** “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Second Reading “**1 Corinthians 10:1 – 13**”

1 For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers and sisters, that our ancestors were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. **2** They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. **3** They all ate the same spiritual food **4** and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. **5** Nevertheless, God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered in the wilderness. **6** Now these things occurred as examples to keep us from setting our hearts on evil things as they did. **7** Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written: “The people sat down to eat and drink and got up to indulge in revelry.” **8** We should not commit sexual immorality, as some of them did—and in one day twenty-three thousand of them died. **9** We should not test Christ, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. **10** And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. **11** These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come. **12** So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall! **13** No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it. The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel “**Luke 13:1 – 9**”

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, “Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.” Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ “ ‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’ ”

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

Sermon

*By Rev. Charles Nolting
“No Excuses”*

In our 2nd lesson from 1 Corinthians, Paul appears to be teaching a history lesson of sorts when speaking about the people in Moses day who fell for temptation and sinned. We might wonder just why Paul speaks about such things. His explanation in the lesson is that the examples of those who lived so long ago are examples for us, examples for us to avoid. Do not be like them. Do not fall for the temptations such as they did or you will also die without any hope.

The reason Paul spoke of these examples was because apparently, there were some in the Corinthian congregation who were absolutely certain that they

could not be tempted. In their minds they were immune to temptation. Paul’s point then is to show that even those who experienced God’s awesome power in the Exodus weren’t immune to temptation. If they fell for temptation, how do you think you are any better?

Temptation is one of those things that you don’t hear much about today. It’s not a hot topic, so it doesn’t seem unreasonable to ask; how do we even know if we are being tempted? There are a few clues including feeling uncomfortable about something, or when a situation presented to you seems to be a little too perfect. Those are often signs that our conscious is working for us.

Another way to know if we are being tempted is to study what others were tempted by, which is a major theme for a good part of Lent. While this lesson gives us some examples of temptations, it may be helpful to read through the New Testament to get a fuller picture of what is out there waiting for us.

People often feel that they are boxed in by temptation, that they don’t have any choice in the matter. It’s kind of like when you approach a traffic light and it is about to turn red. You may feel you have no choice but to go through it by telling yourself things like: *‘I’m travelling so fast that if I brake suddenly, I might get rear-ended. If I stop I’ll be late for my appointment. It’s ok to go through a red in the early stages because no one else is moving anyway. Pedestrians move rather quickly when approached by a speeding car.* When you analyze them however, these are nothing but excuses for breaking the law.

The truth is that we do have a choice. We don’t have to break the law. Unfortunately, there may be some consequences we’d rather avoid. If we didn’t pay attention to the yellow light and are moving too fast, we may indeed get rear-ended. We may be late for an appointment. We may terrorize a pedestrian. But the

main point is that we haven’t fallen for the temptation to break the law of cruising through a red light.

It’s similar with God’s law. There is always a temptation to make excuses for why it’s ok to fall for temptations. And one of the biggest excuses is that we fail to see how to get out of a temptation without difficulty. We too often fall for temptation because it just seems easier than rejecting it.

The good news for us today is found at the very end of this lesson. We are told here that God will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear, and that God will provide a way out so that we can endure it. It may not be easy. It may not be painless. But God will stand with us, so that we will not fall for the tempters power.

Temptation has always been around and it’s something we will always have to put up with as long as we are alive. But by recognizing what we are up against, and with God’s help, we can still avoid it. Praise be to God! Amen.

Prayers

Drawn close to the heart of God, we offer these prayers for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

We pray for the church around the world in all its forms; for pastors, deacons, bishops, chaplains, and mission developers; for church councils, committee chairs, and all lay ministry leaders; for congregations that contemplate difficult decisions about the future of their ministry. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the health of this planet and the well-being of its creatures; for lands impacted by droughts and at risk of wildfires; for fig trees and vineyards that produce fruit for our nourishment and delight; for animal habitats threatened by climate change. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For those called into positions of civic responsibility: for judges, attorneys, and court administrators tasked with

uncovering truth and delivering justice; for activists and community leaders who cast a vision of a more compassionate and equitable society. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For those who call upon you for mercy: for all who live in poverty and experience hunger; for any who feel tested beyond their strength; for those who are hospitalized or near death, and for all in need of healing. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For the faithful workers of this church, for their hard work, and especially for the volunteers of this church without whom much of our ministry would not be possible. May their numbers continue to grow, and their ministry increase. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

For those whose earthly journeys have ended, we give thanks. With all the saints, we praise you for the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. 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.**