

New Hope Lutheran Church

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May 8, 2022

The 4th Sunday of Easter

Coming Events

- May 9 1:00 Worship & Music **Zoom**
May 10 1:30 Finnish Bible Study **Impola Room**
May 11 10 - 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St**
6:30 Council meeting **Regent St**
May 12 6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**
May 13 – 15 Suomi Conference **Agricola**
May 15 10:00 Finnish Worship **Voima Hall**
2:00 English Worship † **Regent St**

In our prayers Ruth, Marilyn.
Remembering Viola Kallio 93 yrs



Happy
Mother's
Day

Prayer of the Day

O God of peace, you brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great shepherd of the sheep. By the blood of your eternal covenant, make us complete in everything good that we may do your will, and work among us all that is well pleasing in your sight, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with your and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalms 23

- ¹ The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing.
² He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,
³ he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.
⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.
⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

First Reading “Acts 9:36 – 43”

³⁶ In Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (in Greek her name is Dorcas); she was always doing good and helping the poor. ³⁷ About that time she became sick and died, and her body was washed and placed in an upstairs room. ³⁸ Lydda was near Joppa; so when the disciples heard that Peter was in Lydda, they sent two men to him and urged him, “Please come at once!” ³⁹ Peter went with them, and when he arrived he was taken upstairs to the room. All the widows stood around him, crying and showing him the robes and other clothing that Dorcas had made while she was still with them. ⁴⁰ Peter sent them all out of the room; then he got down on his knees and prayed. Turning toward the dead woman, he said, “Tabitha, get up.” She

opened her eyes, and seeing Peter she sat up. ⁴¹ He took her by the hand and helped her to her feet. Then he called for the believers, especially the widows, and presented her to them alive. ⁴² This became known all over Joppa, and many people believed in the Lord. ⁴³ Peter stayed in Joppa for some time with a tanner named Simon.

Second Reading “Revelation 7:9 – 17”

⁹ After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. ¹⁰ And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” ¹¹ All the angels were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures. They fell down on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, ¹² saying: “Amen! Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” ¹³ Then one of the elders asked me, “These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?” ¹⁴ I answered, “Sir, you know.” And he said, “These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. ¹⁵ Therefore, “they are before the throne of God and serve him day and night in his temple; and he who sits on the throne will shelter them with his presence. ¹⁶ ‘Never again will they hunger; never again will they thirst. The sun will not beat down on them, nor any scorching heat. ¹⁷ For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water.’ ‘And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.’”

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

Gospel “John 10:22 – 30”

Then came the Festival of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple courts walking

in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

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

Sermon

By Rev. Charles Nolting
"Mothering"

Back in 2007 William Paul Young wrote a bestselling book entitled "The Shack", and one of the things I love most about that story is how much it speaks to the trinity of God the creator, God the redeemer, and God the sustainer – or Father, Son, and Holy Ghost as we have historically referred to them.

What really gave me a kick in William Young's portrayal is that God the creator is portrayed – as he wrote it, as - a large, beaming, African-American woman, who goes by the name of "Papa". I like that depiction because it stretches my image of God, and, (for me at least), it addresses the vastness of God's mothering love for all people.

Now I realize not everyone is going to be comfortable with such an image of God - perhaps because we've spent decades with one image, and we don't like change. However, being Mother's Day, I think it's worth consideration, at least for today. When we think of a loving person who called us as children, whose voice comes to mind? When we think of who cradled us in

their arms in our worst moments of childhood, whose arms were around us?

And I do understand that it may not always have been a mother because there is no one type of mother, yet many mothering souls around the world share similar traits with God. For one thing, there is the trait of immense love for a child. Another mothering trait might be that of children knowing their mother's voice when it is calling their name.

This brings me to a point. With all the voices that call out to us in the world, how do we know which voice to follow? Who do we listen to? It seems that quite often people listen to, and echo, voices that agree with what they think about some issue, which to me feels kind of like a child agreeing with friends that bedtimes and other house rules are ridiculous, therefore there is no need to adhere to them. You may have noticed though, that mass uprisings amongst 5 year olds rarely happen. Why is that?

It may well be that young children have an innate trust in their parent's judgement which overrides any desire to go it on their own. So where does this trust come from? Is it due to hearing their parent's voices alone? Have parents somehow discovered a way to simply reason with a 4 year old and invoke trust?

The reason a young child trusts a parent with little friction is usually because the child has been the beneficiary of a parent's actions to protect them from harm, bring joy into their lives, and comfort them in times of stress. Because of a parent's actions in the past, the child has learned to depend on and trust in them.

On the other hand, when a child hears only words of promise that are then followed by inaction, that is when we find children who are well on their way to distrusting their parents. If you consistently promise to take a child to a playground, but then don't, after a while they lose

that trust no matter what you tell them. Actions count as much or more than words.

And this brings me to Jesus in our gospel lesson. Jesus is being pestered by those who claim they want to know if he is the Messiah so that they can put their trust in him. Of course, they have ulterior motives in that they just want something to convict him of. But while it seems that Jesus is evading their question, he actually answers it by telling them; "the works I do in my Father's name testify about me". In other words, look at my actions, look at what I've been doing, and you will have your answer. Actions say a lot about who we are.

Something similar is happening in our 1st lesson from the book of Acts. We have here a very faithful follower in Dorcas. And when Peter comes as one of the mourners, how is it that those who knew her best describe her? Did they tell Peter of all the great words she had said? No! They showed Peter the results of her actions of making clothing for others. Dorcas was loved and has been designated as a disciple because of her actions. They knew of her love of Christ not only because of what she said, but more importantly, because of what she did. I think its fair to say that Dorcas was a very mothering person.

So, on this Mother's Day, how might we define a mothering person? Well, you can read scads of books and articles which may tell you something, but if you really want the whole story, watch the actions. Whenever I'm hearing stories about someone who was a mother, I'm usually told of their actions more than I'm told about what they said. The actions matter, especially when they work in conjunction with the words.

Something similar is at work in our Christian faith. How often do we speak the words of faith, but forget to act? We may wonder why people don't flock into our midst because we have such wonderful words spoken, yet many flock to groups that are about action. The

problem isn't the message, it's the church's reluctance to act on that message in relevant and meaningful ways. If we don't act, and depend on words alone, how can we expect others to trust what we have to say?

When speaking about ministry outside of these walls (and sometimes within them), I'm often told "I'm too old to do things", and while it's true that there are some physical things elders probably shouldn't do, showing God's love in some way isn't one of them. It's said that one never outgrows being a mother, that once begun, it's a lifelong commitment. In the same way, we should never feel that we age out of being Christians either. Our actions may have to change because of age related ailments, but our showing of God's love through action should never falter.

*Jesus mentioned how the sheep listen to his voice and follow him. The reason for that is because Jesus has added action to his words in sacrificing his life for us. So let us then remember to add action to our words so that other sheep will trust and follow.
Amen.*

Prayers

Set free from captivity to sin and death, we pray to the God of resurrection for the church, people in need, and all of creation.

Gentle Shepherd, enable your church to respond to the voice of Jesus. Give us unfailing trust, unafraid to join in Jesus' work of renewing all things. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Feed your people at the table of creation. Prepare a safe place for those whose environments are dangerous or unhealthy, especially those making difficult journeys. Prosper your creation for the sake of every living thing. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Warm the hearts of all who celebrate and all who mourn on Mother's Day. Accompany those yearning to be mother. Help us to heal from broken family relationships and open us to receive your nurturing love from all who serve mothering roles in our lives. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Seek out those who weep while they await healing or consolation. Set people in their path who can provide the care they need, and wipe away every tear from their eyes. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Inspire the words of prophets and saints who employ innovative imagery to stretch our understanding. Send Christ to instruct us with motherly care. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

Enfold us in the great multitude of saints from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages. Wash us in your saving grace every day, guiding us to your waters of life. God, in your mercy, **hear our prayer.**

In your mercy, O God, respond to these prayers, and renew us by your life-giving Spirit; 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.**