

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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*June 19, 2022*

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*

## Coming Events

- |         |        |   |
|---------|--------|---|
| June 22 | 10 - 1 | Kahvi Time <b>Regent St</b>   |
| June 24 | 3:00   | Juhannus <b>Voima Hall</b>  |
| June 25 |        | John the Baptist celebration<br><b>At Hannah Lake</b><br>5.00 Supper \$15/ticket (sold at Hannah Lk)<br>(oven pancake, breakfast sausages)<br>6:30 Bonfire (if permitted) |
| June 26 | 10:00  | Finnish Worship † <b>Voima Hall</b>   |
|         | 2:00   | English Worship † <b>Regent St</b>  |

**In our prayers** Tyson, Ruth, Marilyn.

## Prayer of the Day

O Lord God, we bring before you the cries of a sorrowing world. In your mercy set us free from the chains that bind us, and defend us from everything that is evil, 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.

## Psalm 22:19 – 28

- <sup>19</sup> But you, Lord, do not be far from me. You are my strength; come quickly to help me.
- <sup>20</sup> Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs.
- <sup>21</sup> Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- <sup>22</sup> I will declare your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise you.
- <sup>23</sup> You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor him! Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
- <sup>24</sup> For he has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.
- <sup>25</sup> From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly; before those who fear you<sup>[a]</sup> I will fulfill my vows.
- <sup>26</sup> The poor will eat and be satisfied; those who seek The Lord will praise him—may your hearts live forever!
- <sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to The Lord, and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,
- <sup>28</sup> for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nations.

## First Reading “**Isaiah 65:1 – 9**”

<sup>1</sup> “I revealed myself to those who did not ask for me; I was found by those who did not seek me. To a nation that did not call on my name, I said, ‘Here am I, here am I.’ <sup>2</sup> All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing

their own imaginations—<sup>3</sup> a people who continually provoke me to my very face, offering sacrifices in gardens and burning incense on altars of brick; <sup>4</sup> who sit among the graves and spend their nights keeping secret vigil; who eat the flesh of pigs, and whose pots hold broth of impure meat; <sup>5</sup> who say, ‘Keep away; don’t come near me, for I am too sacred for you!’ Such people are smoke in my nostrils, a fire that keeps burning all day. <sup>6</sup> “See, it stands written before me: I will not keep silent but will pay back in full; I will pay it back into their laps—<sup>7</sup> both your sins and the sins of your ancestors,” says the LORD. “Because they burned sacrifices on the mountains and defied me on the hills, I will measure into their laps the full payment for their former deeds.” <sup>8</sup> This is what the LORD says: “As when juice is still found in a cluster of grapes and people say, ‘Don’t destroy it, there is still a blessing in it,’ so will I do in behalf of my servants; I will not destroy them all. <sup>9</sup> I will bring forth descendants from Jacob, and from Judah those who will possess my mountains; my chosen people will inherit them, and there will my servants live.

## Second Reading “**Gallatians 3:23 – 29**”

<sup>23</sup> Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. <sup>26</sup> So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. <sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

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

Gospel “**Luke 8:26 – 39**”

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, “What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torture me!” For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places. Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” “Legion,” he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss. A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned. When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left. The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return home and tell how much God has done for you.” So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.*

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

**Sermon**

*By Pastor Charles Nolting  
“Chained”*

One thing I have to say about that very lengthy gospel lesson is that it is so chock full of details that we can easily become distracted from what this story may be attempting to tell us.

You have Jesus being met at the beach by a crazed naked man who lives in the tombs and has arrived seaside upon Jesus’ arrival, apparently just to yell at him. As our first thoughts then, one might begin considering the plight of the mentally ill and how disenfranchised they are.

Then there is the whole conversation regarding demons and how many can fit into a human. Many have gotten lost in speculation of what these demons may have been; from mental illness, to epilepsy, to a brain tumor. This is followed by the demons’ confusing state of mind which changes from berating Jesus, to pleas that Jesus would send them into a herd of pigs.

Of course, that all leads to the mistreatment of animals, and the pork producing industry of that area becoming decimated. Some have questioned whether these people were Jewish and, if so, what were they doing raising swine? They obviously are not impressed with Jesus.

Lastly, and perhaps most puzzling; while Jesus now has a newly enthusiastic follower, who wishes to go wherever Jesus goes; Jesus instructs him to stay in the town whose people chained him, neglected him, and attempted to control him.

So, what are we to make of all this?

We could start with the liberation of this man. While he had been chained by the villagers from time to time until he broke those chains, he was still not actually free. In many ways the demons that possessed him – whatever

they may have been – still kept him in a type of bondage. A person does not need physical means to be kept in bondage, which may entice us to ask ourselves; how might we be in some state of bondage? What keeps people chained in some way that prevents them from fully feeling the freedom of being the children of God mentioned in our 2<sup>nd</sup> lesson?

We may have noticed that some are chained to their finances in that they are unwilling to take a chance and spend lavishly even for a worthy cause. They may fear the loss of what they possess and consider their possessions “earned” rather than given by God and held in their trust.

Some are chained to living in the past, wanting things to be the way they used to be years and years ago, unwilling to acknowledge that the past had its own demons, and we live in a very different world than we did decades ago. For them, the past may have been their glory days, and they want that back, perhaps even fearing what the uncertain future holds. They only see the worst in the present day, which hinders them from reaching out to assist others who don’t see the world the way they do, and may consider others unworthy of their care or concern.

Some may be chained up to their health, especially with the pandemic so close in the recent past. They stay home and away from others for fear that they will catch something regardless of how many precautions are available to them. In doing so they lose their sense of community, and their community misses them in return. How might love be shared in such a situation?

Unresolved hurt has a way of chaining people. Some cannot find the fulness of God’s love because of a past event that has them living that event over and over, knowing that they were wronged, but unable to cut it loose through forgiveness. They may even appear to delight in such a wrong and hang onto it for that very reason. Their fear may come from losing a sense of

purpose if they forgive. All we can do for them is to love, listen, and perhaps nudge them to loosing their chains.

While there are many more things that chain people, hindering them from the love of God and the freedom of being children of God, did you notice a similarity with each of these cases? Fear is common among them all. This fear is also addressed in our gospel lesson. The people of that village feared the man when he was demon possessed. They feared Jesus when he cured the man and asked Jesus to leave. This may be the reason Jesus left that man behind and commanded him to stay in that place; so that the villagers could face their fear.

One last note on this story. This week our country celebrates National Indigenous Day, and I was struck by the similarities between Canada's history with the Indigenous people, and this man to the village he came from. He was different, so they attempted to control him. He appeared "wild" which frightened them, so they felt that gave them license to hinder his movement. In Jesus however, a right relationship was restored between that man and the people he lived amongst. Such a restoration is what we are attempting to complete by having such a day on our national calendar.

In the end, I suppose that while this story has many things to teach us, the overlying message appears to be that just as Jesus helped free this man, we are to assist others in finding their freedom in Christ. In the days to come, let's ask ourselves; how can we help ourselves and others overcome fears that chain us and find a fuller freedom as God's children? Amen.

### **Prayers**

United in Christ and guided by the Spirit, we pray for the church, the creation, and all in need.

Holy God, you hear the cries of those who seek you. Equip you church with evangelists who reveal the continuous call of your outstretched hands and your promises of a home in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You hear the cries of the earth. Restore places where land, air, and waterways have been harmed. Guide us to develop and implement sources of energy and food production that do not destroy the earth. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You hear the cries of those who are marginalized or cast out. On this Juneteenth observance, guide us continually toward the end of oppression in all its forms, especially white supremacy. Bring true freedom and human flourishing to all your beloved children. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You hear the cries of those who suffer. Come to the aid of all who are homeless, naked, hungry, and sick. Bring peace to any experiencing mental illness, that they can clearly recognize your loving presence. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

You hear the cries of those who celebrate and those who grieve on this Father's Day. Nurture mutual love and tender care in all relationships. Comfort those for whom this day brings sadness or longing. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the faithful departed whose lives proclaimed all you had done for them. At the last, unite us with them as we make our home in you. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of every time and place, in Jesus' name and filled with your Holy Spirit, we entrust these spoken prayers and those in our hearts into your holy keeping.

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.**