

New Hope Lutheran Church

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June 26, 2022

The 3rd Sunday after Pentecost

Coming Events

- June 29 10 - 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St**
- July 3 10:00 Finnish Worship **Voima Hall**
2:00 English Worship † **Regent St**
- July 6 10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St**
- July 10 11:00 Finnish Worship **Hannah Lake**
12:00 Lunch \$15 / ticket **Hannah Lake**
(call Hilikka 705-562-3959 for tickets)
1:30 English Worship **Hannah Lake**
- July 13 10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St**
- July 15 Suvijuhla / Mid Summer at **Hannah Lake**
5:00 Dinner \$25 / ticket
(call Allison 705-562-3137 for tickets)
6:30 Bilingual program
- July 17 10:00 Finnish Worship **Voima Hall**
10:00 English Worship with Trinity **Regent St**

In our prayers Tyson, Ruth, Marilyn.

Prayer of the Day

Sovereign God, ruler of all hearts, you call us to obey you, and you favor us with true freedom. Keep us faithful to the ways of your Son, that leaving behind all that hinders us, we may steadfastly follow your paths, we pray through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with your and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Psalm 16

¹ Keep me safe, my God, for in you I take refuge.

² I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing."

³ I say of the holy people who are in the land, "They are the noble ones in whom is all my delight."

⁴ Those who run after other gods will suffer more and more. I will not pour out libations of blood to such gods or take up their names on my lips.

⁵ Lord, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure.

⁶ The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance.

⁷ I will praise the Lord, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

⁸ I keep my eyes always on the Lord. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken.

⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure,

¹⁰ because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay.

¹¹ You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

First Reading "1 Kings 19:15 – 16, 19 – 21"

¹⁵ The LORD said to him, "Go back the way you came, and go to the Desert of Damascus. When you get there, anoint Hazael king over Aram. ¹⁶ Also, anoint Jehu son of Nimshi king over Israel, and anoint Elisha son of Shaphat from Abel Meholah to succeed you as prophet.

¹⁹ So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him. ²⁰ Elisha then left his oxen and ran after Elijah. "Let me kiss my father and mother goodbye," he said, "and then I will come with you." "Go back," Elijah replied. "What have I done to you?" ²¹ So Elisha left him and went back. He took his yoke of oxen and slaughtered them. He burned the plowing equipment to cook the meat and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he set out to follow Elijah and became his servant.

Second Reading "Gallatians 5:1, 13 – 25"

¹ It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other. ¹⁶ So I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. ¹⁷ For the flesh desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the flesh. They are in conflict with each other, so that you are not to do whatever you want. ¹⁸

But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. ¹⁹ The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰ idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹ and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

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

Gospel “**Luke 9:51 – 62**”

Glory to you, O Lord.

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem. And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him; but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. When the disciples James and John saw this, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?” But Jesus turned and rebuked them. Then he and his disciples went to another village. As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, “I will follow you wherever you go.” Jesus replied, “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.” He said to another man, “Follow me.” But he replied, “Lord, first let me go and bury my father.” Jesus said to him, “Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God.” Still another said, “I will follow you, Lord; but first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.” Jesus replied, “No one who puts a hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”

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

Sermon

*By Pastor Charles Nolting
“Excuses, Excuses”*

In our gospel for today we find that, as Jesus set out for Jerusalem, he attempted to enlarge his following. After being rebuffed while trying to enter a Samaritan village, Jesus and his disciples continued on their way. They encountered a quick succession of three persons invited to follow.

The first offered to follow Jesus wherever he went, yet Jesus discouraged him with a comment regarding the possibility of homelessness that Jesus and the disciples often faced. Jesus invited a second person they met to follow him, and he seemed agreeable to the idea, except he needed to tend to some family matter first; something Jesus found unacceptable. A third offered to follow, but he begged off for some time to stop by his home to say farewell. Jesus doesn't appear to consider that person good disciple material either.

In every case, Jesus seemed unduly harsh, allowing that there is absolutely no excuse, absolutely nothing that must get in the way of following Jesus. In spite of this, how often do we find abundant excuses why we do not follow Jesus, or why our following of Jesus is less committed than it should be, or why we are less than enthusiastic about following Jesus all the time or at all costs? I'm sure we've all been exposed to many excuses as they pertain to church attendance.

The kids have sports on Sundays.

It's the only day I can play golf, or fish, or sleep in.

We had company. I had to fix a big dinner, meaning I was up late on Saturday night.

And so it goes.

The most outrageous excuse for why a person wasn't in church on Sunday came from a woman who lived right across the street from her church. The pastor went to see her on a Monday, and she explained her absence this way: *“I got up in the morning in plenty of time for church, so I made myself a cup of coffee and sat down at the kitchen table. Then I began to debate whether or not I would go to church, and by the time I made up my mind, church was over.”*

As surely as people have excuses for why they are not involved in the life of the church, the same can be said

for the shallow faith of too many people. *It's too hard to be a Christian. I get my religion online these days. The gospel conflicts with what is expected of me at work.* Those words just slip out. And on it goes.

Today's gospel also lists some common excuses. *Life is already difficult, I don't need more possible hardship. I have family business to tend to. I must see my family first. I want to be a dedicated Christian, but not yet. I have something else that I must do first.* Interesting, isn't it, how often a person's excuses have to do with family. That's probably why Jesus always insisted that the Kingdom must come first, that you may have to turn your back on your family, that following him might even turn members of a family against each other.

As surely as people make excuses for why they are not better Christians – better followers of Jesus – congregations also make their own excuses for why they are not fully committed to bringing the Kingdom into fruition. People forget whose church it is. Some may think of it as their own private club. They fashion the church to their own liking and resent the newcomer who would sit in their pew or take their parking place or bring a new idea.

One pastor claimed that the best church ever served was in a once-small village outside a big city. When the growing city encroached on their turf, rather than batten down the hatches and try to drive the newcomers away so that things would always stay the same, they threw the doors open wide and invited one and all into the Lord's house. Yes, it was viewed as the Lord's house, and they instinctively knew that, and that church grew and prospered and did the Lord's work.

You know all the excuses, and if you are wise, you know that not one of them will hold up in the end. You know who it is that has called us, and you know what

God has called us to be - and what God has called us to do. Sometimes though we like to pretend we don't know, because if our vision is fuzzy it allows us to proceed with our own agendas. Today though, we are reminded that we are to let nothing get in the way of our being the person God wants us to be – or the congregation God wants us to be – and doing things that God wants us to do.

If we are truly serious, there are no excuses. You cannot dream up better ones than have already been used, and in the end not one of them will hold up. So no excuses. Jesus wants you to follow him. Period. Follow him. No excuses. It matters a lot. Amen.

Prayers

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

God of faithfulness, set the face of your church firmly on your. Rooted in your self-giving love, may the church find freedom in loving our neighbors. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of gentleness, strengthen the earth's ability to heal. Where there are dangerous storms, bring calm. Where there are destructive fires, bring rain. Protect homes, habitats, and livelihoods threatened by climate disasters. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of peace, guide all who govern, that they place the good of their citizens above self-promotion. Anoint leaders of nations with your Spirit of neighborly love. Protect refugees and all who live under tyranny or conflict. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of kindness, reveal your healing presence to all who are sick or dying. Uphold those who grieve. Support the needs of any who are unemployed, hungry, or have nowhere to lay their heads. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of love, attend to those struggling with addiction, depression, or uncontrolled anger. Provide support systems and loving companions as they work toward health, that they may rest in hope and know the fullness of joy in your presence. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of joy, we give thanks for all who have died and now celebrate the inheritance of life in you. Keep their examples of faithfulness always before us, that we trust your promises in life and in death. 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.**