

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

August 14, 2022

The 10th Sunday after Pentecost

Coming Events

Aug 15 – 22 Hilikka's holidays. During Hilikka's holidays phone messages and emails will be checked.

Aug 17 10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St**

Aug 18 6:30 Finnish devotions **Hannah Lake**

Aug 21 No Finnish Worship **Voima Hall**
2:00 English Worship with Trinity **Regent St**

Aug 25 3:00 **Regent St** Members of the congregation are invited to attend the marriage service of Peigi Kunkel & Seppo Haapamaki.

In our prayers Ruth, Marilyn.

REMEMBERING: Eila Kivistö 96 yrs



Lord of all; you promise to be with us in our joys and our sorrows. Today we humbly ask you be with the friends and family of Eila Kivistö, to guide them through their grief and sorrow. Bless them with your loving presence, and secure them in their faith. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

O God, judge eternal, you love justice and hate oppression, and you call us to share your zeal for truth. Give us courage to take our stand with all victims of bloodshed and greed, and, following your servants and prophets, to look to the pioneer and perfecter of our faith, your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalms 82

- ¹ God presides in the great assembly; he renders judgment among the "gods":
- ² **"How long will you defend the unjust and show partiality to the wicked?"**
- ³ Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed.
- ⁴ **Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked.**
- ⁵ "The 'gods' know nothing, they understand nothing. They walk about in darkness; all the foundations of the earth are shaken.
- ⁶ **"I said, 'You are "gods"; you are all sons of the Most High.'**
- ⁷ But you will die like mere mortals; you will fall like every other ruler."
- ⁸ **Rise up, O God, judge the earth, for all the nations are your inheritance.**

First Reading "Jeremiah 23:23 – 29"

²³ "Am I only a God nearby," declares the LORD, "and not a God far away? ²⁴ Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?" declares the LORD. "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" declares the LORD. ²⁵ "I have heard what the prophets say who prophesy lies in my name. They say, 'I had a dream! I had a dream!' ²⁶ How long will this continue in the hearts of these lying prophets, who prophesy the delusions of their own minds? ²⁷ They think the dreams they tell one another will make my people forget my name, just as their ancestors forgot my name through Baal worship. ²⁸ Let the prophet who has a dream recount the dream, but let

the one who has my word speak it faithfully. For what has straw to do with grain?" declares the LORD. ²⁹ "Is not my word like fire," declares the LORD, "and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?"

Second Reading "Hebrews 11:29 – 12:2"

²⁹ By faith the people passed through the Red Sea as on dry land; but when the Egyptians tried to do so, they were drowned. ³⁰ By faith the walls of Jericho fell, after the army had marched around them for seven days. ³¹ By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. ³² And what more shall I say? I do not have time to tell about Gideon, Barak, Samson and Jephthah, about David and Samuel and the prophets, ³³ who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised; who shut the mouths of lions, ³⁴ quenched the fury of the flames, and escaped the edge of the sword; whose weakness was turned to strength; and who became powerful in battle and routed foreign armies. ³⁵ Women received back their dead, raised to life again. There were others who were tortured, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. ³⁶ Some faced jeers and flogging, and even chains and imprisonment. ³⁷ They were put to death by stoning; they were sawed in two; they were killed by the sword. They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, persecuted and mistreated— ³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. ³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, ⁴⁰ since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

12:1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us,

² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

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

Gospel **“Luke 12:49 – 56”**

Glory to you, O Lord.

“I have come to bring fire on the earth, and how I wish it were already kindled! But I have a baptism to undergo, and what constraint I am under until it is completed! Do you think I came to bring peace on earth? No, I tell you, but division. From now on there will be five in one family divided against each other, three against two and two against three. They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law.” He said to the crowd: “When you see a cloud rising in the west, immediately you say, ‘It’s going to rain,’ and it does. And when the south wind blows, you say, ‘It’s going to be hot,’ and it is. Hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky. How is it that you don’t know how to interpret this present time?”

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

Sermon

By Rev. Prema Samuel

Assistant to the Bishop

Synod of Alberta and the Territories

Welcome to this summer sermon series that our Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada is providing for congregations. I am Rev. Prema Samuel and I serve as the Assistant to the Bishop for Congregational Life of the Synod of Alberta and the Territories. It is great to be with you this Sunday.

In the spirit of respect, reciprocity and truth, I honour and acknowledge that I live and work and pray on traditional and ancestral territory of the many First Nations, Metis, and Inuit whose footsteps have marked these lands for centuries. I am speaking to you today from Treaty 6 territory and Metis Nation of Alberta, Region IV, in Leduc. Leduc is situated on the traditional territories of the Peoples of Treaty 6, which includes 16 Alberta First Nations, as well as the Peoples of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

I acknowledge the many First Nations, Métis and Inuit who have lived in and cared for these lands for generations. I am grateful for the traditional Knowledge Keepers and Elders who are still with us today and those who have gone before us. I make this acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those whose territory I reside on or am visiting. I invite you to take a moment in gratitude to acknowledge the land in which you are joining us from.

Gee, somebody got up on the wrong side of the bed! Somebody give this Jesus some coffee. Who is this guy?

Jesus has been teaching as he goes. A parable here, an exhortation there. In fact, earlier in chapter 12 of Luke, Jesus’ teachings feel rather reassuring and cozy...he tells his followers not to worry, to consider the birds of the air and lilies of the field, reminding them that they are precious in God’s sight. And hear these words of comfort, “Do not be afraid, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke 12:32) This is my kind of Jesus.

Our text for today gives us real pause. Here is the Prince of Peace, the one the angels sang their praises about at his birth, the love of God incarnate, Jesus, The Christ, telling his listeners that he has come to bring division. By following him, families will sunder. Communities will sunder. This isn’t peace. This isn’t comforting. This is chaos. And we don’t know what to do with this passage.

It feels like Jesus has had a terrible, horrible, no-good, very bad day. “I have come to bring fire to the earth, and oh how I wish it were blazing already! Do you think I have come to bring peace to the earth? No! I’ve come for division!” Jesus is confronting and disrupting and turning things upside down. Well then. What happened to considering the lilies? And our preciousness in God’s sight? I mean, Jesus! Where did this angry guy come from? One commentator that I read as I prepped for this verse even called this passage embarrassing. It wasn’t Jesus as we understood him. This was an angry, demanding Jesus who made us uncomfortable and uneasy.

In the children’s novel *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis, four British siblings enter a coat closet and discover a whole other world called Narnia. This magical world is filled with talking animals and the original Lion King, a lion named Aslan, who rules over all of Narnia. The youngest child Lucy strikes up a conversation with Mr. Beaver, asking about Aslan, “is he quite safe?” to which Mr. Beaver replies, “Safe?” Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good. “Of course, God isn’t safe, but God is good.

Perhaps this text is so uncomfortable for us because it doesn’t match our experience. That isn’t what being part of a church is all about. But what we don’t understand in this part of the world is something that my relatives in India understood all too well.

My maternal Grandmother, who I call as Amamma was known as a prominent evangelist and faith healer. Her Ashram stands to this day outside of Bangalore, India. I spent much of my time there as a child and when my Amamma died, her children by blood and in ministry continue to run the Ashram to honor the life of her mother and the ministries that had been established there over the years. Education for rural children, a church, an orphanage among many. I saw many things

there that I can only call a miracle in the most real sense of the word. Yet it wasn't always that way.

My Ammamma was in fact a convert from Hinduism. While she was a Hindu, her family comes from the Brahmin caste and were temple builders, deeply honoring the faith they had been born into. A family that was deeply respected and was wealthy. She was loved, adored, and spurned.

But when my Ammamma encountered the Gospel and converted, everything changed. Her husband, my grandfather, my Thatha initially was not in favor of her decision. He knew what the repercussions were likely to be. Eventually, her faith and her passion won him over, and he joined her in her new faith.

That brought the change. Their families tried to convince them, threaten them. But when it didn't work, they shunned them... ostracized them. But many of her family members never reconciled themselves to the fact that she was now a Christian. Her family shunned her for the rest of their days. Her brother who adored her didn't want anything to do with her or anyone associated with her. She was dead to him, as long as she remained a follower of Christ.

Despite everything that she had to endure, her faith continued. She never wavered in following the one whom she had encountered, the Risen Christ and her devotion to him was absolute, even when it cost her family. She was a Christian. It was who she was.

Just as my Ammamma performed great acts of love and compassion, her daughter, influenced deeply by her mother, went on to a life of service. Her ministry was quite different than my Ammamma's. She was the consummate church diplomat, but her life had an incredible impact on so many others as she strove for justice for women, the Dalits and all those who were vulnerable to the whims of those with power. And it all started when my Ammamma chose to follow Jesus.

Things are so different in this part of the world. Many of us were born into our church and have known nothing else. The Canadian society is one where various religious practices have a place and most people are open to that wonderful tapestry of faith traditions. Any persecution that does arise is decried by most people. I wonder, how would we react if we were put into a position like my Ammamma, when we stand to lose everything just by following Jesus?

We may believe that this is a hypothetical consideration which we will likely never encounter, yet we face an important crux in our history. The role of faith groups is being tested right now in North America. Often, our name as Christians has been attached to a lot of questionable behavior (to put it mildly).

Will we side with justice and stand up against these practices and for the rights of all people? Will we act as stewards and protectors of the created world? Will we follow the example of Jesus, the justice bringer and risk alienating our friends and family or members of our church? Or will we side with the status quo which would have the church stay silent, concentrating on an easy complacent spirituality, a few fun programs and generally staying out from under foot? That is the easier way. But it is not the way Jesus calls us to. Do we have the courage, even though we know that if we follow where Jesus leads, we may find out firsthand what he is talking about in this passage?

The truth is, whether I am telling the story of my Ammamma or asking us to consider the way of mercy, the result, if we are left on our own, is the same. We would fail. If the Holy Spirit had not been with my Ammamma, she would not have lasted. If the Holy Spirit had not been with the many converts throughout history, they would have failed too. And any justice work we try to do would be dead before we even had the chance to start it if the Holy Spirit wasn't with us.

Thus, this passage becomes less about Jesus being angry to Jesus being prophetic. He knew, beyond a

shadow of a doubt, what would happen if a person was to take his call seriously. It would burn. It would mean sacrifice. It would mean division. It would mean pain. But the world needed those men and women in the world. The world needed the message that they were to carry to all whom they encountered.

The call goes on for all of us and the consequences have not changed. That isn't easy to hear, but it is still the truth, just as it was when Jesus first uttered these words. We will speak truth to power, stand up for the weak and vulnerable, advocate for the created world, and live into the radical love of God. We will have hope when the world falls farther and farther into despair. And it will cost us.

But it will also sustain us. It will sustain us with the knowledge of God's spirit with us always, now, and forever. God is breathing God's very life into us so that we can take that next step and the one after and the one after that. And in so doing, we discover a life of purpose, grounded in that same, radical, all-encompassing love.

It was the love that sustained my Ammamma. It is the love that has sustained every Christian throughout the course of time. It is the same love that will sustain us. As the fire burns, the Spirit reminds us that God is with us in the fire. Like the ashes left after the forest fire produce rich soil, the ashes left behind after the strange fire of God's refining are the starting point for new life.

God has used dust and ash to create since the Garden of Eden, kneeling in the soil breathing new life. And God does so with us today. God kneels in the dirt and ash, gently whispering and tending, patiently cherishing, and coaxing new life out of places that appear charred and ruined. Where we see only worthless destruction, God sees promise and hope. Despite everything that may be lost as we follow our Risen Saviour, nothing could be greater than that amazing gift of love.

Amen.

Prayers

Trusting in God's extraordinary love, let us come near to the Holy One in prayer.

Arise, O God, and sustain your church. We pray for all who dedicate their lives to serving your people. Renew our commitment to our siblings in faith around the globe, and bless the work of our ecumenical and interfaith partners. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Arise, O God, and sustain your creation. We pray for all places affected by natural disasters. Transform the devastation of floods and fires into fertile ground for new life and growth. Fill heaven and earth with your life-giving Spirit. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Arise, O God, and sustain the nations. We pray for all elected officials. Kindle in them a desire to administer your justice. Strengthen their resolve to defend those who are vulnerable and to stand publicly against all forms of oppression. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Arise, O God, and sustain those who are oppressed. We pray for people harmed by racist discrimination, ableist discrimination, and all people discriminated against based on their gender identity or sexual orientation. Rescue us from all systems that degrade our fellow human beings. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Arise, O God, and sustain this assembly. We pray for this community, celebrating with those who rejoice and weeping with those who weep. In our joy and in our tears, be near us. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, we remember the saints who have gone before us. May we run with perseverance the race set before us until we find our rest in you. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Receive the prayers of your children, merciful, God, and hold us forever in your steadfast love; through Jesus Christ, our holy Wisdom.

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.**