

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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## Pastors:

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**September 18, 2022**

*The 15<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost*

## Coming Events

- Sept 21 10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St.**  
2:00 Mission Circle **Finlandia**
- Sept 25 10:00 Finnish Worship Service † **Voima Hall**  
2:00 Lay English Worship Service **Regent St**
- Sept 27 2:00 Kammari **Impola Rm**  
Kammari starts with a Bible study from 2-2.30pm and continues from 2.30pm on with a coffee and pulla (2\$). You can come and have a coffee, even if you are not attending the Bible study. Welcome all to have coffee and meet friends!
- Sept 28 10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St.**
- Sept 30 **Hannah Lake's Event**  
6:00 Supper & Bonfire **Hannah Lake**  
Tickets \$5  
Please reserve or purchase tickets in Advance from Allan (705) 691-5767

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

## Prayer of the Day

God among us, we gather in the name of your Son to learn love for one another. Keep our feet from evil paths. Turn our minds to your wisdom and our hearts to the grace revealed in your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

## Psalm 113

- <sup>1</sup> Praise the LORD. Praise the LORD, you his servants; praise the name of the LORD.
- <sup>2</sup> Let the name of the LORD be praised, both now and forevermore.
- <sup>3</sup> From the rising of the sun to the place where it sets, the name of the LORD is to be praised.
- <sup>4</sup> The LORD is exalted over all the nations, his glory above the heavens.
- <sup>5</sup> Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high,
- <sup>6</sup> who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?
- <sup>7</sup> He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap;
- <sup>8</sup> he seats them with princes, with the princes of his people.
- <sup>9</sup> He settles the childless woman in her home as a happy mother of children. Praise the LORD.

## First Reading “**Amos 8:4 – 7**”

<sup>4</sup> Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, <sup>5</sup> saying, “When will the New Moon be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?”—skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, <sup>6</sup> buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat. <sup>7</sup> The LORD has sworn by himself, the Pride of Jacob: “I will never forget anything they have done.

## Second Reading “**1 Timothy 2:1 – 7**”

<sup>1</sup> I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—<sup>2</sup> for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. <sup>3</sup> This is good, and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. <sup>5</sup> For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who gave himself as a ransom for all people. This has now been witnessed to at the proper time. <sup>7</sup> And for this purpose I was appointed a herald and an apostle—I am telling the truth, I am not lying—and a true and faithful teacher of the Gentiles.

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

## Gospel “**Luke 16:1 – 13**”

**Glory to you, O Lord.**

*Jesus told his disciples: “There was a rich man whose manager was accused of wasting his possessions. So he called him in and asked him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your management, because you cannot be manager any longer.’ “The manager said to himself, ‘What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I’m not strong enough to dig, and I’m ashamed to beg—I know what I’ll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses.’ “So he called in each one of his master’s debtors. He asked the first, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ “ ‘Nine hundred gallons of olive oil,’ he replied. “The manager told him, ‘Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it four hundred and fifty.’ “Then he asked the second, ‘And how much do you owe?’ “ ‘A thousand bushels of wheat,’ he replied “He told him, ‘Take your bill and make it eight hundred.’ “The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will*

*be welcomed into eternal dwellings. "Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."*

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

### Sermon

*By Rev. Charles Nolting  
"Upside Down Thinking"*

When we look at this parable in light of today's world, we can see that Jesus parables were not far off from reality – even our own reality centuries later. And, at first glance we might wonder what the point is, because it seems so unlike Jesus to praise up some dishonest worker who cheats his boss.

Reading on just a bit further, Jesus in fact closes today's lesson with comments on the merits of being honest. In essence he says that if you want to find someone who will be honest in a major undertaking, first find someone who is honest in small tasks. How can you entrust great responsibility to some one who can't even handle small responsibilities? This may lead us to consider what we do in the world. How do we handle even the small menial tasks that are handed to us every day, at home or at work? Are we tempted to brush them aside because they are beneath us? Do we feel we shouldn't have to be bothered with the less meaningful work of the world?

In our faith life, I'm sure there are times when we all want God to work something magnificent in us, but are we also willing to do the tedious? Do we take seriously

Paul's words to Timothy to spend time praying for others, as something beneath ourselves? In all aspects of our lives then, we need to be willing to take on even the most mundane, if we truly want to be great in God's eyes. This is how God works. It's kind of upside-down thinking.

In today's parable we have an example how God often seems to think upside-down from the way we normally would. While this manager appears to be praised in the parable, what we need to remember here is that Jesus is not praising the actions of the manager, but rather the way this person thinks. He works all the angles to make the best of a bad situation so that the best results will be achieved. Jesus urges followers to be zealous and clever in preparing for the kingdom of God by thinking outside of the box.

I know that can seem kind of difficult for us on the surface, because so often we just want our lives to go a certain way, to be just like everyone else, and when they do we don't think too much further about it. That actually puts us at a disadvantage. In his book, *David and Goliath*, author Malcolm Gladwell points out that there are reasons why, throughout history, underdogs have gained the upper hand when such a thing just didn't seem possible.

In the David and Goliath battle, I suspect (if we're honest with ourselves) we all would have laid odds that Goliath would win. Goliath was big and tall and strong and well armed. He had experience in battle and was confident. If you recall the story, you may remember that David was given armor to wear and weapons to carry, but after trying it on, decided that it wasn't for him. He would go in with his sling alone. In worldly terms, it really doesn't make any sense does it?

What we often forget is that our worldly instinctive ideas about what is an advantage can be wrong, especially when the opponent is thinking outside of the box. David didn't go at this fight as someone who fought

battles against humans, but rather as someone who had fought bears and lions and, let's face it, those are a lot more dangerous than a human. Even a big one. And while a sling may be kind of useless in hand to hand combat, it is a great distance weapon. You don't need to get close to wound the opponent. For David, it was God's upside-down thinking that made him the winner.

Gladwell makes a few other interesting points in his book, such as the unexpected benefits of adversity. We all know that there is going to be suffering in our lives at some point along the way, but how often do we think of it as a learning experience and instead turn our backs on it as much as possible? How often do we take the world's advice and attempt to avoid all suffering? The thing about suffering though, is that it offers us the opportunity to learn things about ourselves, our family, and our friends – if we let it.

Let's take for example how Christianity is sliding backwards in the northern hemisphere. Once upon a time the north may have been Christian, and most of the Southern hemisphere wasn't. Today the south is the area where Christianity is growing by leaps and bounds. Why is that? It's because those who live with adversity of all kinds, those who are on the bottom, they understand, they "get" God's upside-down thinking. They use the street smarts that Jesus praises in that shrewd and dishonest manager. They find ways around the top dog thinking in order to spread God's word and deepen their own faith, as well as spreading it to others.

So how do we do that here, where we are so often the top dog? Well, first of all, let me suggest to you that we get away from that top dog mentality, and begin to understand that as dedicated Christians we are becoming more and more the minority. We are going to have to start thinking differently about our approach to

life and one way to begin that is to ask ourselves how we look at our life. Is your life a possession or a gift?

If you see your, then you are going to feel that you are the only one in charge of your life and you will make decisions based on what is good for you alone. When you see your though, you realize that your life is precious to God, and it is very valuable. So, are you going to use it walking all over the weak, treating the poor as less than nothing, and wanting to spend your time being as comfortable as possible? Or do you see your life as having purpose and meaning, in serving others? It's kind of upside-down thinking, isn't it?

So today we are reminded that about our lives: what we do with them and how we live them; in a way that can be totally different from the rest of the world.

We are to think about money and possessions differently. We are to think about our relationships to others differently. We are to consider all aspects of our lives in a rather upside-down manner. Those who have to do so already are actually at an advantage. In God's economy, people matter more than profits. Remember then that even when the world sees us as less than desirable, we are still precious in God's eyes – and live accordingly. Amen.

### **Prayers**

As scattered grains of wheat are gathered together into one bread, so let us gather our prayers for the church, those in need, and all of God's good creation.

God our Savior you keep your church in faith and truth. Accompany those preparing for baptism or affirmation of baptism. Enlighten preachers, teachers, seminarians, and all those who share your good news with the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Divine teacher, you instruct your children to be responsible steward of your creation. Show us how

best to care for the earth and its resources, and guide those who work to develop sustainable practices. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Ruler of the nations, you direct those in authority. Give leaders wisdom and compassion so that all may live in peace. Inspire public servants to follow the example of courageous leaders and safeguard the dignity of each person. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Helpers of the needy, you lift up those who are oppressed. Breathe justice into economic and social systems that perpetuate poverty and hunger. Sustain food ministries, clothing banks, and emergency shelters. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Sustainer and giver of life, you bless this congregation with abundance. Instruct us in the proper and faithful use of wealth and resources, that we share generously. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

God of glory, you gather your saints around your throne. Keep us thankful for the witness of those who have gone before us, and bring us with them to the heavenly feast that has no end. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

Gathered together in the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit, gracious God, we offer these and all our prayers to you; 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.**