

New Hope Lutheran Church

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September 4, 2022

The 13th Sunday after Pentecost

Coming Events

- Sept 6 1:00 Worship & Music **Zoom**
- Sept 7 10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St.**
6:30 **Hannah Lake** English Devotional
Guest speaker – Gerry Lougheed
- Sept 8 6:30 **Hannah Lake** Finnish Devotional
- Sept 11 **New Hope Rally Sunday at Hannah Lake**
10:30 Bilingual Service
12:00 Lunch \$10
Please reserve or purchase tickets in
Advance (office 705-673-2933)
- Sept 16 **Hannah Lake's Event**
5:00 Dinner \$25 **Hannah Lake**
Please reserve or purchase tickets in
advance. Call Allan (705) 691-5767
6:30 Presentation on Regreening of Sudbury

In our prayers Ron, Ruth, Marilyn.

Prayer of the Day

Direct us, O Lord God, in all our doings with your continual help, that in all our works, begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; 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 1

¹ Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.

³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither— whatever they do prospers.

⁴ Not so the wicked! They are like chaff that the wind blows away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.

⁶ For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

First Reading “Deuteronomy 30:15 – 20”

¹⁵ See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. ¹⁶ For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, ¹⁸ I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

¹⁹ This day I call the heavens and the earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life

and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live ²⁰ and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Second Reading “Philemon 1 – 21”

¹ Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker—² also to Apphia our sister and Archippus our fellow soldier—and to the church that meets in your home: ³ Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. ⁴ I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, ⁵ because I hear about your love for all his holy people and your faith in the Lord Jesus. ⁶ I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ.

⁷ Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the Lord's people. ⁸ Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, ⁹ yet I prefer to appeal to you on the basis of love. It is as none other than Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—¹⁰ that I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. ¹¹ Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. ¹² I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. ¹³ I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. ¹⁴ But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do would not seem forced but would be voluntary. ¹⁵ Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back forever—¹⁶ no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a fellow man and as a brother in the Lord. ¹⁷ So if you consider

me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me.
¹⁸ If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. ¹⁹ I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. ²⁰ I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. ²¹ Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask.

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

Gospel “Luke 14:25 – 33”

Glory to you, O Lord.

Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said:

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. “Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won’t you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, ‘This person began to build and wasn’t able to finish.’ “Or suppose a king is about to go to war against another king. Won’t he first sit down and consider whether he is able with ten thousand men to oppose the one coming against him with twenty thousand? If he is not able, he will send a delegation while the other is still a long way off and will ask for terms of peace. In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.

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

Sermon

*By Rev. Charles Nolting
“Responsible Commitment”*

That Old Testament lesson from Deuteronomy comes across pretty strong, doesn’t it? *“I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction.”* It’s such

strong language that it may easily come across as a threat. Life or death. Prosperity or destruction. You may feel like if you don’t do one, you will be faced with the horrible consequences of the other. And, of course - brave people that we are - we don’t turn away from threats, do we? We laugh at them and toss them aside, totally ignoring them!

In this case though, such action would be kind of senseless. What we don’t always seem to realize is that this isn’t a threat at all. It’s advice. And its good advice that’s been given lovingly. One of the problems with having only the written word at our disposal, is that we are forced to imagine the tone of voice that was spoken for any given verses. So, for these verses, how do you imagine God’s voice? Is it booming and threatening? Or is it said lovingly, with a great deal of concern for those who are hearing it?

I think we can get a better grip on what the actual tone of voice might be if we look at the context and the wording. In this case, the context is that the people are about to enter the promised land – finally. After decades of wandering, and wondering if this will ever come to an end, the end is finally in sight. They can see it. They can almost taste it!

Of course, God, who has led them on this incredible journey, needs to know if they are ready for it. Are they going to be good stewards of this land and prosper as God plans, or are they going to let it all go to pieces if they settle there? And so, the scripture tells us that God sets before them their options: *“if you love the lord your God, you will have life and prosperity”*. This is what our loving God wants for them. This is what our loving God dreams of for them.

God however, also knows that they are capable of blowing it. And, as a good parent, God also warns them that this blessing could also turn out to be a curse if they aren’t careful. So, like any good parent, God want them to make a commitment to be responsible. Think of a parent handing over the car keys to a

teenager. *“This can be a good thing for you, a great thing - but you have to be responsible, or it will could become a horrible experience.”*

It turns out then, that God isn’t being threatening, but rather loving. This is why God asks for a commitment from the people. If this is going to work, we are going to need a responsible commitment from you. If you desire the good things to come, they can only happen through such a responsible commitment.

Jesus voice in our gospel lesson is another example of where we are forced to imagine the tone of the conversation. I think when a lot of people initially hear this, they find Jesus words kind of threatening, but we probably should ask ourselves why. Once again, God is asking for a responsible commitment, and being fair and loving enough to lay it all out for us, so that we don’t find out later that this may be more difficult than imagined. That’s the kind of thing the forces of evil would do; just tell us the good things without any mention that there might be a price to be paid.

Jesus, on the other hand, lays it all out, offering us the most valuable thing one could ever imagine. Life with God here and now, and for all eternity. What could possibly hold us back? Jesus lays that out as well. Your family, and a love of having your life your own way is the cost, so consider it carefully.

The things that hold us back are our own selfish interests, aren’t they? We want to have it all. We want to be Jesus disciples and at the same time we want to get along with everyone and have a carefree life the way we like it. We don’t want to be forced to choose. Unfortunately, for our own well being, we must.

This is why God asks each of us for a commitment, a commitment to be responsible and turn our lives to the task of serving God with the aim of presenting God’s saving love to all people. God doesn’t just work on his own, but through God’s people. The people play a part

in God's story as well – something that the scriptures have always shown us.

It occurs to me that this is a good message for our congregation at this time in our history. Similar to the Israelites, we began by leaving our former home, and for the past few years we have been kind of wandering, and wondering. The pandemic was not all that helpful either, even if we did see some blessings come out of it.

But at this point, right now, we may be very close to coming back together in a lot of different ways. You've probably heard that our building committee is looking at something more permanent than what we have now. The details aren't worked out, so I have very little information to give you at this time.

But I want you to think about this: as we look to enter a new home, today's scriptures encourage us to consider the cost. The cost of both leaving all this, as well as the cost of attempting to continue the way things are. What we will be needing as a congregation is a commitment, a responsible commitment.

The people of Israel gave their commitment and they moved ahead. The disciples of Jesus gave their commitment and they accomplished incredible things. In the months ahead, we may have a decision set before us. May God be with us as we consider our responsible commitment. 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.

We pray for the church around the world and for the mission of the gospel. Refresh the hearts of your people, deepen our understanding of every good thing we share, and strengthen our partnerships in the faith. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the well-being of the earth and all its creatures: for trees and forests, for all that will yield fruit this season, and for streams and other bodies of water. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For the nations and those in authority: for the elected leaders of our towns, provinces, and country, and for international organizations. Grant wisdom to those who govern and raise up citizens who make decisions in the best interest of their neighbors. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For all in need: for those who suffer from disease, who struggle with homelessness or food insecurity, for those whose family life is difficult, and for all in this community who need your care. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

For this community of faith: for all our labors—begun, continued, and ended in you—that they glorify your holy name. Bless your people with the strength to live into their many vocations for the sake of the world. God of grace, **hear our prayer.**

We give thanks for the saints who now rest from their labors. Give us faith, like them, to love you with all our hearts, and by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life. 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.**