

New Hope Lutheran Church

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October 9, 2022

Thanksgiving Sunday

Coming Events

- | | | |
|--------|--------|---|
| Oct 11 | 2:00 | Kammari Impola Rm |
| | 7:00 | Eng Bible Study Zoom |
| Oct 12 | 10 – 1 | Kahvi Time Regent St. |
| | 1:00 | Worship & Music Zoom |
| | 6:30 | Council mtg Regent St. |
| Oct 13 | 6:30 | Finnish Bible Study Zoom |
| Oct 16 | 10:00 | Finnish Worship Service † Voima Hall |
| | 11:30 | Lunch Regent St |
| | 12:30 | Synod update with Rev. Doug Reble
Regent St |
| | 2:00 | English Worship Service † Regent St |

In our prayers Eero, Ron, Ruth, Marilyn.

Prayer of the Day

Almighty God, your generous goodness comes to us new every day. By the work of your Spirit, lead us to sincerely acknowledge your goodness, give thanks for your benefits, and serve you in willing obedience, we pray through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalms 111

- ¹ Praise the Lord. ² I will extol the Lord with all my heart in the council of the upright and in the assembly.
- ³ Great are the works of the Lord; they are pondered by all who delight in them.
- ⁴ Glorious and majestic are his deeds, and his righteousness endures forever.
- ⁵ He has caused his wonders to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and compassionate.
- ⁶ He provides food for those who fear him; he remembers his covenant forever.
- ⁷ He has shown his people the power of his works, giving them the lands of other nations.
- ⁸ The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy.
- ⁹ They are established for ever and ever, enacted in faithfulness and uprightness.
- ¹⁰ He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name.
- ¹¹ The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all who follow his precepts have good understanding. To him belongs eternal praise.

First Reading “Deuteronomy 26:1 – 11”

¹ When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it, ² take some of the first fruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name ³ and say to the priest in office at the time, “I declare today to the LORD your God that I have come to the land the LORD swore to our

ancestors to give us.” ⁴ The priest shall take the basket from your hands and set it down in front of the altar of the LORD your God. ⁵ Then you shall declare before the LORD your God: “My father was a wandering Aramean, and he went down into Egypt with a few people and lived there and became a great nation, powerful and numerous. ⁶ But the Egyptians mistreated us and made us suffer, subjecting us to harsh labor. ⁷ Then we cried out to the LORD, the God of our ancestors, and the LORD heard our voice and saw our misery, toil and oppression. ⁸ So the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror and with signs and wonders. ⁹ He brought us to this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey; ¹⁰ and now I bring the first fruits of the soil that you, LORD, have given me.” Place the basket before the LORD your God and bow down before him. ¹¹ Then you and the Levites and the foreigners residing among you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.

Second Reading “Philippians 4:4 – 9”

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. ⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. ⁹ Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.

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

Gospel “John 6:25 – 35”

Glory to you, O Lord.

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.” So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ ” Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.” Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

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

By Rev. Charles Nolting
“Remember the Past”

The gospel lesson we just heard is **one that follows some well-known stories** like: the feeding of the 5000, and then the return of the disciples across the Sea of Galilee in a storm when Jesus, who happened to be walking on water, joined them and calmed the storm. Then the next day, the crowds who had been left behind, realized that Jesus was gone, and returned to the other side of the lake in search of Jesus.

Our gospel says that they did find him, and **Jesus is a bit miffed** because they only seem to follow him for the prospect of free food. So, he wants to set them straight as to what he is about. And, as part of that, Jesus asks for a commitment from them, but they in return want a miracle as proof - like when Moses gave their ancestors bread. We should note that Jesus has to straighten them out on this point, reminding them that it was God who gave their ancestors bread, not Moses. While Moses was the conduit, it was God who was ultimately responsible. In the end, Jesus gets more upset with them because he has already shown them miracles and they still refuse to see. It's like they've forgotten the past – including the recent past in their case.

One of the things we often find in scriptures is **how important it is to remember the past**. In our 1st lesson, the prescribed ritual for thanksgiving is for the people presenting their thanksgiving gifts to come forward and recite a portion of their past, a past they themselves may not have had anything to do with, but it was the past of their ancestors. They are to remind themselves that: they came from rather humble and stark beginnings, they became a numerous people under the cloud of slavery and harsh task masters. That situation got to the point where the ancestors cried out to God and requested relief; which in time came to them in the form of Moses who led them out of the land and into a life of wilderness wandering. In that wild land they were re-formed into a new people, people who would learn to trust in God, that God would provide them with the necessities needed for life as well as an abundance of spiritual nourishment.

When they were ready, **they entered a new land**, a land usually described as flowing with milk and honey – meaning a place where one could make a comfortable living and enjoy the good things that the earth has to offer. That place is often referred to as *“the promised land”*, a place where everything you dream about in the darkest days of your existence, can come true. Now if

you are a part of any such promised land, one would think you would be grateful for that, and one would respond with thanks.

At the heart of all of this lies the one who made your dreams come true; and for the Israelites, that person is God. History to them was nothing unless you included God working throughout your history and that of your ancestors. It's rather different from how we usually view history today, isn't it? Today history is rather dull and drab by comparison and everything seems to be based on economics and personalities. Have we remembered to see God working in our own personal history, who provided for those people before us who felt the call to stand up and act, moving to a new land, believing that God would be with them? And do we share that story with others?

One reason for going so far back into the past is because **the farther back you go, the more likely you are to see God's hand at work** in the lives of you and your ancestors who were responsible for bringing you here. As I am sure you are aware, there are times when God appears to take an awful long time to come through on promises. This is what is known as God's time. This is how God works. God is not so much about instant gratification as He is about long-term security. Sometimes one event has to unfold before another can begin.

I'd like to pose a theoretical question: **How often does God have to wait** as people dawdle and take their time before completing a task necessary before the next step can be put into place? When we add it all up and consider how some very unlikely events came to pass in order for us to get to this point; that's when we see how God has been at work in our lives, perhaps even before we were born. God has been at work a long time, so that our time would be blessed. For that, I think we should be thankful.

Another reason to look so far back is to share that history we know with those who are younger, **so they have some sense of who they are**, not just today, but where their roots are. It is a matter of being rooted to people of the past. A faith building exercise would be to not only share where God has blessed your life, but also to share where God blessed the lives of our ancestors – and to point out because of that, we have benefited.

One last reason to remember the past, is **so that details are clarified**. Remember the crowd of people from our gospel? How they claimed it was Moses who had miraculously provided them with bread? By regularly recounting the past deeds of God in our life and the lives of our ancestors, we keep a strong connection between God and family. We remind ourselves that it is God who ultimately brought us here and the one to whom we are to give thanks for our envious situation. We do, after all, have all that we require and often more. If future generations are going to recount their past anywhere near accurately, then they need accurate details from us while we still can give them.

So this weekend, **take some time to remember and share your past** and that of your ancestors. In doing so you may well help yourself and others to see how God's hand has been working for your benefit long before you were even born. In remembering you will also give another generation a connection to the past and their roots, and help them understand how God took a people and transplanted them from a life of misery to a life of promise. And hopefully you will also be able to give them some details so that they will understand that even in the midst of misery, God not only works, but has been constantly working for the benefit of us all.

And in all of this, **give thanks to God** not only for the blessings of today, but also for the blessings that brought us to this point today. Amen.

Prayers

In gratitude and humility, let us join together in prayer on behalf of all of God's creation.

Gracious God, we give you thanks for bishops, pastors, and deacons. Inspire leaders of the church to proclaim your mighty deeds, that your saving faith may be known to all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Majestic God, we give you thanks for land and water, seedtime and harvest. Break down boundaries we construct between ourselves and the rest of your creation. Bring renewal and restoration to places affected by pollution and deforestation. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Mighty God, we give you thanks for those in our community, nation, and world who work for justice and peace. Guide those who govern to act on behalf of those marginalized by race, ethnicity, or religion. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Merciful God, we give you thanks that you hear the cries of those in need. Restore to community those who are stigmatized by illness, feel rejected, or who live in isolation. Send healing to all who suffer. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Faithful God, we give you thanks for the healing ministries of this congregation. Equip those who visit, care, and pray for the sick. Give insight to doctors, nurses, home health aides, and all practitioners of medical arts. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Eternal God, we give you thanks for your faithful people who have gone before us to your glory. Renew our trust in your eternal promises of mercy, redemption, and new life. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

With grateful hearts we commend our spoken and silent prayers to you, O God; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, 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.**