

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. Johanna Porkola
phone: 705-688-6284 email: pjp@nhlc.ca

April 30, 2023

4th Sunday of Easter

Coming Events

- May 2 2:00 Kammari **Impola**
- May 3 10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St.**
- May 4 10:00 Finnish Worship Service
Finlandia Nursing Home Chapel
6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**
- May 7 9:30 Finnish Worship Service † **Voima Hall**
11:30 English Worship Service † **Regent St.**

In our prayers Mailis, Eero, Ron, Marilyn.

Prayer of the Day

O God our shepherd, you know your sheep by name and lead us to safety through the valleys of death. Guide us by your voice, that we may walk in certainty and security to the joyous feast prepared in your house, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

First Reading “Acts 2:42 – 47”

⁴²The baptized] devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. ⁴⁴All who believed were together and had all things in common; ⁴⁵they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. ⁴⁶Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷praising God and having the goodwill of all the people. And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved

Psalms 23

- ¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not be in want.
² The Lord makes me lie down in green pastures and leads me beside still waters.
³ You restore my soul, O Lord, and guide me along right pathways for your name’s sake.
⁴ Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I shall fear no evil; for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.
⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies;
you anoint my head with oil, and my cup is running over.
⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Second Reading “1 Peter 2:19 – 25”

¹⁹It is a credit to you if, being aware of God, you endure pain while suffering unjustly. ²⁰If you endure when you

are beaten for doing wrong, what credit is that? But if you endure when you do right and suffer for it, you have God’s approval. ²¹For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you should follow in his steps. ²²“He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.” ²³When he was abused, he did not return abuse; when he suffered, he did not threaten; but he entrusted himself to the one who judges justly. ²⁴He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that, free from sins, we might live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. ²⁵For you were going astray like sheep, but now you have returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

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

Gospel “John 10:1 – 10”

Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said: “Very truly, I tell you, anyone who does not enter the sheepfold by the gate but climbs in by another way is a thief and a bandit. The one who enters by the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he has brought out all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but they will run from him because they do not know the voice of strangers.” Jesus used this figure of speech with them, but they did not understand what he was saying to them. So again Jesus said to them, “Very truly, I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. All who came before me are thieves and bandits; but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the gate. Whoever enters by me will be saved, and will come in and go out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”
The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Sermon

By Rev. Johanna Porkola

The Gospel text last Sunday focused on loving Jesus, God, and how we should show that love in this world. Today we focus on what that love of Jesus gives us and what meaning it has for our eternal life. Also, Jesus uses an image familiar to the people of his day to make a point about spiritual leadership. Those who listen to Jesus are led to abundant life.

Talking about sheep and shepherds is quite far from how we interpret and understand our own lives and the environment where we live in. I've asked, at least in a Finnish service, if there is anyone there who has actually been a shepherd. You know, some hands have gone up. Usually it has been cow-herding. Nowadays, sheep and cattle are in fenced lands, there is no need to look for fields further.

At the time of the previous war, Karelians were expelled or evacuated from Karelia in Finland. They had to leave and bring their cows across the border on foot. I knew an old lady like that who used to herd those sheep and cows crossing boarder when she was a little girl. She said that in the first days the paper shoes completely broke and the rest of the travel had to be walked barefoot. He was about 9 or 10 years old then. The rest of the family, mother and several younger brothers and sisters, had gone by train and she, as the eldest, had walked several hundred kilometers with the cows. Father was fighting at the front. Of course, there were others on the same trip, so there was no need to be alone. Still I think, would I put my own girl on that trip alone with the cows? No wonder that lady before her death received an award from the president for her achievement. The local veteran association understood to ask and suggest that medal to her. There were many kind of heros then, even children.

What does this teach us about shepherding and what Jesus calls us to do. It teach us loyalty and faithfulness towards the task that has been given. You could imagine, that a 9-10-year-old girl might very easily leave the cattle there in the forest. It's not so nice to walk hundreds of kilometers hungry in any weather. But no, the faithful shepherd does her job and finds out a safe route for the cattle. A shepherd looks for the necessary food, pasture for his cattle and protects his flock. That's what leading the church is all about. According to the ancient philosopher, the task of the shepherd is to supervise, guard and protect his flock, not to slaughter. The shepherd theme was very popular in antiquity, specifically as an idea related to leading the people. How is it, would this thinking also be helpful in the current government, parliament and state management?

Jesus' speech is quite a figurative, symbolic, as always with John. In the previous chapter, it was told about a blind man who was healed by Jesus and who was questioned by the Pharisees. The Pharisees have threatened to expel from the synagogue everyone who confesses Jesus as the Messiah. So, the Pharisees do not gather the flock, but scatter the flock. There are many references in the Old Testament to the fact that the leaders of Israel are bad shepherds and only scatter. Jesus is the gate that opens the right door, leads to the right way. This can be thought of as true doctrine, while those who sneaked in through the side door teach false doctrine. We make a decision, already in this world whether we follow the right voice or some other voice. Do we always even want to follow the voice of truth, voice of Jesus? That other voice, the voice of the world, is often very attractive. It seems easier, and there is certainly more fun and glory on the other road, at least that's what we think.

I often think about our children, our teenagers here in Western countries, where there is quite a lot of different voices and temptations, noise. How can any child or

young person find the right way and hear the right voice? That requires guidance. Are we doing enough as congregation for young people and children? Are we guiding them to make the right and safe choices in life? Is a community even needed for such a thing? Is it only parents or schools job? I think we could do more, much more.

Christians always have difficulties in one way or another in the world. In Lutheran fashion, we are not asked to lock ourselves out of the world but to be part of the world. Our thought, our hope, in this sometimes brutal world is, that we have a guardian who holds the keys to our eternal life. Jesus' teaching about the good shepherd is based on mutual trust between the shepherd and his flock and the shepherd's willingness to sacrifice for his flock. Through this we may notice the difference between earthly and heavenly leadership and power: How do those who have power in this world, use it and what goals do they have?

The congregation should be recognized by the fact that its head and leader is Christ Jesus, who does not wish evil or wrong to any of his members. Each of us should see the face of Christ in every person we meet. You, a parishioner, are our business card wherever you go. Our faith, your community, our church will be evaluated through you. It's a big responsibility, and we may forget this every now and then. Who do I represent in this world? Not just yourself, you can be sure of that. How each one of us copes with that representation task, is the responsibility of the party to whom our hearts belong. Does your heart belong to the world or does it belong to Jesus? That decision we have to make every day. Amen

Prayers

United in the hope and joy of the resurrection, let us pray for the church, the world, and all in need.

You are the shepherd who gathers us in your mighty and loving arms. Help your church to listen for your

voice, especially when the voices of sin, idolatry, and oppression threaten to overpower us. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

The green pastures, still waters, and dark valleys of this earth all belong to you, O Lord. Sustain your creation with a love that is both mighty and just. Where there is destruction, bring healing. Where there is desolation, bring abundance. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You proclaim shepherding love, comfort, and protection for all people and all of creation. Direct leaders in our own time to learn from your example and instruction. Give them servant hearts, that they generously seek the good of all. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You journey with us wherever our paths may lead. We pray for those feeling overwhelmed by anxiety or depression or suffering in any way. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

You are the sheepgate that gives safety to your beloved flocks. Provide protection for refugees, victims of domestic violence, those who are imprisoned, and all people who are vulnerable to violence and mistreatment. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

You call your sheep by name and lead them through the valley of death. We give you thanks for those who have died and now dwell in your house forever. Be with those who mourn, and give them hope in the promise of resurrection. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Rejoicing in the victory of Christ's resurrection, we lift our prayers and praise to you, almighty and eternal God; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

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.**