

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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*April 26, 2020*  
*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter*

## ALL EVENTS FOR THE COMING WEEK HAVE BEEN CANCELLED

*Please remember to send in your offering.*  
*We now have a **donate button** on our web site [nhlc.ca](http://nhlc.ca)*

*The office is closed, but phone messages, email and mail  
are being checked regularly.*

### Prayer of the Day

O God, your Son makes himself known to all his disciples in the breaking of bread. Open the eyes of our faith, that we may see him in his redeeming work, we pray in the name of Him who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

### IN OUR PRAYERS

Aline, Fred, Pentti, Esme, Martha, Derek, Maria and Kai.

### First Reading Acts 2:36 – 41

**36** “Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.” **37** When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” **38** Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” **40** With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” **41** Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day.

### Psalm 116:10 – 17

**10** I trusted in the LORD when I said, “I am greatly afflicted” **11** in my alarm I said, “Everyone is a liar.” **12** What shall I return to the LORD for all his goodness to me? **13** I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. **14** I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. **15** Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his faithful servants. **16** Truly I am your servant, LORD; I serve you just as my mother did; you have freed me from my chains. **17** I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD.

### Second Reading 1 Peter 1:17 – 23

**17** Since you call on a Father who judges each person’s work impartially, live out your time as foreigners here in reverent fear. **18** For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, **19** but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect. **20** He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake. **21** Through him you believe in God, who raised him from the dead and glorified him, and so your faith and hope are in God. **22** Now that you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth so that you have sincere love for each other, love one another deeply, from the heart. **23** For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.

### Gospel Luke 24:13 – 35

**13** Now that same day two of them were going to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. **14** They were talking with each other about everything that had happened. **15** As they talked and discussed these things with each other, Jesus himself came up and walked along with them; **16** but they were kept from recognizing him. **17** He asked them, “What are you discussing together as you walk along?” They stood still, their faces downcast. **18** One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days?” **19** “What things?” he asked. “About Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied. “He was a prophet, powerful in word and deed before God and all the people. **20** The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; **21** but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel. And what is more, it is the third day since all this took place. **22** In addition, some of our women amazed us. They went to the tomb early this morning **23** but didn’t find his body. They came and told us that they had seen a vision of angels, who said he was alive. **24** Then some of our companions went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said, but they did not see Jesus.” **25** He said to them, “How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! **26** Did not the Messiah have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?” **27** And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. **28** As they approached the village to which they were going, Jesus continued on as if he were going farther. **29** But they urged him strongly, “Stay with us, for it is nearly evening; the day is almost over.” So he went in to stay with them. **30** When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. **31** Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. **32** They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” **33** They got up and returned at once to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven and those with them, assembled together **34** and saying, “It is true! The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.” **35** Then the two told what had happened on the way, and how Jesus was recognized by them when he broke the bread.

**April 26, 2020 – The 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter**  
**“Stepping Back to Get Ahead”**

After hearing this gospel lesson, have you ever thought to yourself, *what was the matter with those disciples?* I mean, they obviously knew Jesus and had seen and heard him before, so why couldn't they identify him while in conversation with him on the road to Emmaus? I suspect recognition was a problem because, in their minds, they were of the belief that Jesus had died, regardless of reports to the contrary. For that reason, while it may have crossed their minds that this stranger looked and acted like Jesus, how could it possibly be him? The idea of Jesus being alive and well just didn't make sense. It was too big a problem to overcome.

What we might want to note today is the route Jesus took to revealing who he was to these travelers. He went at it in a roundabout direction; by taking them back to the scriptures and pointing out all the places where it mentioned the messiah - what the messiah had to go through, and what would be accomplished. By first stepping back from himself and pointing to God, Jesus was able to not only prove that he was alive, but also to show that he was the messiah – which was his point. But he only overcame their problem - and finally getting through to them - by stepping back.

That approach can be useful for us too. There are times we have problems in life and the solution may not be looking for a way of getting rid of the problem, (as we are often tempted to do), but rather working around it. When we have a problem in life it can seem to just stare us in the face and laugh at us because we are unable to get rid of it – and it freezes us up.

For Cleopas and his friend, Jesus death was staring them in the face and, even though they had heard rumors to the contrary, they were unable to get past that. So it wasn't the problem that was holding them back, it was their response to the problem; their attitudes towards it. What this story of the road to Emmaus tells us then is that it is not necessarily our problems we need to worry about, it's whether we can step back enough from it to see how to get around a problem; especially a pesky one that won't go away.

In the case of our gospel, (and maybe in some of our cases too), the way to get around a problem begins with the scriptures. Sometimes we need to be reminded that there is an incredible amount of good advice there – advice that can help

us out even in this day and age. Whether we like it or not, we have to deal with people and situations we find ourselves in, and a lot of biblical knowledge is about dealing with people and unwanted situations. One of the main messages is not to get stuck in worldly ways. The reason usually given for this advice is that way too often worldly ways wind up being nothing more than a dead end.

Another way to step back is through prayer. Share your concerns and worries with God, and take the time to listen for answers as well. Often it is in the listening we feel God's presence the strongest with us. Some people call this exercise of listening “meditation”, a practice that goes way back with God's people. Focus on what you are asking of God, and listen to what is going on in your mind.

Today we are reminded to keep this story of the road to Emmaus in mind when we are faced with a problem that just won't seem to go away, and doesn't appear to have an answer. You can begin by stepping back to the scriptures. You are allowed to question, and you can pray about your questions. You can remember that even though we may not always recognize Jesus presence right with us, he is nonetheless walking beside us in our life journey and working on getting us to see him in a whole new light. May you have the Emmaus experience of stepping back to get ahead, and know the blessings of Jesus presence in your life. Amen.

### **Prayers**

Uplifted by the promised hope of healing and resurrection, we join the people of God in all times and places in praying for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

We pray for those whose hearts are fervent with love for your gospel, that they are empowered to tell the story of your love in their lives and to show hospitality in response to this love.

We pray for broken systems we have inherited and continued to perpetuate to the point that now they are showing their weaknesses in a time of crisis. Forgive us for attempting to hoard rather than share. Redeem us from the cycles of

scarcity and the resulting violence, anger, and anguish of the poor.

We pray for all who live in fear in these times. May they find comfort in your word, the Holy Scriptures, and find your reassuring presence in their lives. Give them the knowledge that your perfect love casts out fear.

We pray for those who feel alone in these days of isolation, that they may fill their days with good things. We give thanks for those who contact them to show your caring love for all people.

We pray for all who are ill in these times. Let your healing presence be known to them. Comfort them through any pain and suffering. Guide those who tend to the ill with your wisdom and compassion.

We pray for front line workers; for those who work in hospitals, pharmacies, in retail stores that are still open, for emergency workers, and all who work to keep essential services running. Bless them with the knowledge of your presence and keep them safely in your care.

We pray for those whose lives have been torn apart by shootings in Nova Scotia. Look over those who are dealing with the added grief due to the loss of loved ones. May your comforting presence give light and hope in this time of sorrow.

Create in our hearts a yearning to rest in your promise of eternal and resurrected life. Give us thankful hearts for those who have died, even as we look forward to the hope of new life with you.

With bold confidence in your love, almighty God, we place all for whom we pray into your eternal care; through Christ our Lord. Amen.