

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

Pastor:

Rev. Charles Nolting
phone: 705-920-3573 email: pcn@nhlc.ca

August 23, 2020

12th Sunday after Pentecost

**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*

*Previous Sunday sermons and bible studies can be found
on the website.*

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

IN OUR PRAYERS

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

Prayer of the Day

O God, with all your faithful followers of every age, we praise you, the rock of our life. Be our strong foundation and form us into the body of your Son, that we may gladly minister to all the world, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

First Reading Isaiah 51:1 – 6

1 “Listen to me, you who pursue righteousness and who seek the LORD: Look to the rock from which you were cut and to the quarry from which you were hewn; **2** look to Abraham, your father, and to Sarah, who gave you birth. When I called him he was only one man, and I blessed him and made him many. **3** The LORD will surely comfort Zion and will look with compassion on all her ruins; he will make her deserts like Eden, her wastelands like the garden of the LORD. Joy and gladness will be found in her, thanksgiving and the sound of singing. **4** “Listen to me, my people; hear me, my nation: Instruction will go out from me; my justice will become a light to the nations. **5** My righteousness draws near speedily, my salvation is on the way, and my arm will bring justice to the nations. The islands will look to me and wait in hope for my arm. **6** Lift up your eyes to the heavens, look at the earth beneath; the heavens will vanish like smoke, the earth will wear out like a garment and its inhabitants die like flies. But my salvation will last forever, my righteousness will never fail.

Psalms 138

1 I will praise you, LORD, with all my heart; before the “gods” I will sing your praise. **2** I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your unfailing love and your faithfulness, for you have so exalted your solemn decree that it surpasses your fame. **3** When I called, you answered me; you greatly emboldened me. **4** May all the kings of the earth praise you, LORD, when they hear what you have decreed. **5** May they sing of the ways of the LORD, for the glory of the LORD is great. **6** Though the LORD is exalted, he looks kindly on the lowly; though lofty, he sees them from afar. **7** Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life. You stretch out your hand against the anger of my foes; with your right hand you save me. **8** The LORD will vindicate me; your love, LORD, endures forever— do not abandon the works of your hands.

Second Reading Romans 12:1 – 8

1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. **2** Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will. **3** For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not

think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. **4** For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, **5** so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. **6** We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; **7** if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; **8** if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Gospel Matthew 16:13 – 20

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” **14** They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” **15** “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” **16** Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” **17** Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. **18** And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. **19** I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.” **20** Then he ordered his disciples not to tell anyone that he was the Messiah.

August 23, 2020 – 12th Sunday after Pentecost

From the Summer Sermon Series 2020

by Rev. Jason Zinko

Grace, Mercy, and Peace to you in the name of Christ our Saviour.

I first want to say thank you for inviting me into your congregations and into your homes to speak about the gospel reading that we have been assigned today.

“Peter’s Confession,” as this part of Matthew’s gospel is often called, is an incredibly important part of Jesus’ story. It is a turning point in Matthew’s gospel in some ways. It is here that

Jesus starts to unveil his succession plan, handing over the ministry to Peter and the disciples after Jesus is no longer with us in body. It is also where Jesus' journey to the cross in Jerusalem picks up some steam.

But at the heart of Peter's confession, or should I say the reason for it, is Jesus' question about what people are saying about him. More importantly, Jesus wanted to know what his followers were saying about him and who his disciples believed him to be.

This is not a question about understanding or knowledge. Jesus is not asking if his disciples have seen enough proof or if they have finally caught on to what Jesus has been teaching them.

This is a question of purpose and identity. By posing this question, Jesus is actually asking the disciples, "Why are you here? Why did you leave your old lives behind to wander across the country with me? What does it mean for you to follow me?"

We might think these are questions that the disciples would have asked long before following Jesus around the countryside for a year or more. But again, understanding who Jesus is does not come only through a specific amount of listening, learning, or experience. In part, our belief about who Jesus is comes from God and is revealed through faith. It is God's grace and faithfulness that allow us to see Jesus clearly for who he is.

For us, these questions of Jesus' identity are incredibly important to keep in mind. Who we believe Jesus to be will shape our faith, our discipleship, and ultimately our ability to see God at work in the world around us. They will help us to solidify our identity as disciples, and help us to understand our true motivation in ministry – both as individuals and as a church.

I think it goes without saying that this has been a strange year. Nothing seems to be 'normal' – even after many places across our country have been getting back to some sort of normal over the past months. Certainly, nothing has been 'normal' in the church. Our members, leaders, clergy, and bishops have all had to do some reimagining since March. We have had to pivot a number of times and try to find creative ways of meeting the needs of our congregations and ministries while also making

sure that we protected our most vulnerable members and the communities around us.

In all of this, it seems that we have really had to stop and think about our identity and purpose. We have needed to contemplate why we should start up certain practices, programs, or ministries, and why others needed to be postponed or left behind. We needed to prioritize the most effective and most valued ministries because we knew it was impossible to go back to the way everything was last year.

Those decisions about ministry did not rely only on practicalities. Those decisions, when made in faithful and healthy ways, were intended to help us think about, define, and live out our identity as disciples. They will hopefully help our whole church to refine our purpose before we move forward. But more importantly, those questions will help us to each clearly understand who Jesus is and who we are as his followers. That is what will best allow God to form us in faith so that, in each corner of our lives, we will be better equipped to see God at work and to faithfully respond to the needs of the world.

I'm not sure if you are all aware, but this weekend was supposed to be the time that youth from across the ELCIC and the Anglican Church of Canada would have gathered together for CLAY – the Canadian Lutheran and Anglican Youth Gathering. Under the theme "En Route", our youth were going to explore what it meant to have faith and to be followers of Jesus in daily life. I am so sorry to all of our youth that this couldn't happen for you this year. I know that for many of you, it was going to be your first time at a gathering. For others, it would have been your last time to take part in an event or ministry that has been so important in your faith lives.

I am also sorry for our church that our youth have missed this experience. CLAY Gatherings are extraordinary events to help with the faith formation of some of our younger members. These are places where our youth get to think and pray about who Jesus is and what a life of following Jesus means. They are times of building our Christian identity and growing in our understanding and purpose as God's children.

I hope that we will all find other ways of engaging our youth in the faith formation that they missed this summer. But I also hope that we will seriously consider how we, old and young,

can more actively engage in practices that will allow God to form and re-form our faith so that we can see clearly who Jesus is and how our lives as disciples carry on the work that God has called us to in baptism.

This is not work that we do on our own or for ourselves. This is not about becoming better versions of ourselves in order to win God's approval. This is work that can only be possible because of the never-ending grace and faithfulness of God, expressed through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

In baptism, and through the gift of the Holy Spirit, God calls each of us to a life of discipleship – of following Jesus – so that we are able to share the good news that we see and experience all around us.

And that life of discipleship will call us to work for justice for the marginalized and outcast. It will make us re-examine how our actions can bring harm to others, to creation, and to ourselves. And it will demand that we change those harmful ways of being. A life of discipleship will naturally call us to action to care for our communities in a way that carries on the ministry that Jesus embarked on, to which we are called each and every day.

In your homes, communities, and congregations, a life of discipleship will take on different forms and will address different needs. But regardless of the specific ways you live out your faith, a life of discipleship will be characterized by service, compassion, justice, and mercy. It will be a way that others can see and experience God in their lives.

My hope and prayer for each of you is that you are able to see Jesus clearly in your lives and that God will give you the grace and faith that you need in order to follow. My prayer is that we will all learn to be disciples and carry on the ministry that Jesus has entrusted to us.

Grace and peace to you in that work, and in our ministry together.

Amen.

Prayers

Confident of your care and helped by the Holy Spirit, we pray for the church, the world, and all who are in need.

Lord our rock, you are our foundation in Jesus Christ, your Son, whom we confess as the living God. Prepare your church for its mission in bearing witness to Christ, both here at home and throughout the world.

You call forth praises from the far reaches of the universe to the smallest of creatures. Join our songs to theirs, that a spirit of praise and thanksgiving will arouse us to cherish this wondrous home you give us.

All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord. Direct the leaders of countries, legislators and magistrates, mayors and councils, to walk in your ways. Help leaders regard those in need with mercy and fulfill your loving purposes in the governance of peoples.

Though we walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve us, deliver us, and fulfill your purpose for us. According to your steadfast love, grant healing and wholeness to those who are bereaved, in trouble or adversity, or sick and in need of care.

You call us into this community, in which we, though many, are one in Christ. May we recognize in ourselves and in one another the unique gifts you have given us for the building up of the church for the sake of the world.

You are the everlasting Rock from which we were hewn, and you restore your people to joy and gladness. In blessed memory and hope, we thank you for the lives of our beloved dead. Bring us with them to our heavenly home.

In the certain hope that nothing can separate us from your love, we offer these prayers to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**