

# New Hope Lutheran Church

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*July 5, 2020*

*5<sup>th</sup> 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](http://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**

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

## **Prayer of the Day**

You are great, O God, and greatly to be praised. You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you. Grant that we may fully believe in you, call upon you, know you, and serve you, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

## **First Reading Zechariah 9:9 – 12**

**9** Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious, lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. **10** I will take away the chariots from Ephraim and the warhorses from Jerusalem, and the battle bow will be broken. He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth. **11** As for you, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will free your prisoners from the waterless pit. **12** Return to your fortress, you prisoners of hope; even now I announce that I will restore twice as much to you.

## **Psalms 145:8 – 14**

**8** The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. **9** The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made. **10** All your works praise you, LORD; your faithful people extol you. **11** They tell of the glory of your kingdom and speak of your might, **12** so that all people may know of your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingdom. **13** Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and your dominion endures through all generations. The LORD is trustworthy in all he promises and faithful in all he does. **14** The LORD upholds all who fall and lifts up all who are bowed down.

## **Second Reading Romans 7:15 – 25**

**15** I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. **16** And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. **17** As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. **18** For I know that good itself does not dwell in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. **19** For I do not do the good I want to do, but the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. **20** Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. **21** So I find this law at work: Although I want to do good, evil is right there with me. **22** For in my inner being I delight in God's law; **23** but I see another law at work in me, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within me. **24** What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? **25** Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.

## **Gospel Matthew 11:16 – 19, 25 – 30**

**16** "To what can I compare this generation? They are like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling out to others: **17** " 'We played the pipe for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not mourn.' **18** For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.' **19** The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by her deeds."

**25** At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. **26** Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do. **27** "All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. **28** "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

## **July 5, 2020 – 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost "Is That a Yoke You're Wearing?"**

One of the questions we often ask ourselves as a congregation is: why don't people show their belief in God? While a good portion of the population often claims to have such a belief, we rarely see them darken church doorways, or support our various ministries in any way.

It could be that Jesus answers that very question in our gospel lesson for today. In the first part of that lesson, he compares the masses of so-called believers to children whining that they can't have things both ways and illustrating this with his own experience: John the Baptist was pretty much a solitary hermit and derided by the masses for that - and he, Jesus, was a social butterfly who associated with all kinds of people - and derided by the same people for that. The result was that people didn't follow either of them, and still wondered why they had lost touch with God.

Is this a similar problem that people have today? Do people still struggle between the delicious temptations of secular life versus the promise of eternal life? I suspect so. While the secular life is filled with many treats that people believe they long for, how many are feeling unfulfilled deep down? How many long for a life with purpose and meaning instead of baubles that come one day and become meaningless the next?

Some might make the claim that Christians, are often hypocrites; preaching to others of love, justice, and mercy, but not always acting on it. And to a certain degree it is true and even acknowledged in the Bible. Why else would Jesus have come if not to take away those very sins we commit? In confession of sins, even we acknowledge we are not perfect, which is why we are so in need of God's loving gift to us. It really isn't a secret. But some see that as a burden.

Something else that may put people off is the Christian attitude of putting others ahead of oneself. It totally clashes with the worldly attitude that we should put ourselves at the head of the line. Why even attempt to give one tenth of my income to the church when I can get myself something nice instead? Why should I have to give so that others can benefit? Isn't believing that God exists enough? Why burden me with this?

This may get us to question whether people do actually believe, or if they just would like to believe. How do we know if we or anyone, really believes something or not? The answer lies in action. I believe, for example, that this summer is going to come to an end and the days will become colder down the road. And because I believe this very strongly, I will tend to act on it. I'm not throwing out my winter clothes or selling off the snow clearing equipment. So, in this case, I'm acting on a belief.

And that's what a belief should do for us; cause us to act. Because when we believe, truly believe, that a deadly virus is present, we distance ourselves, wash hands frequently, and wear masks in public. And yes, it can be a burden. For those who choose to do otherwise, I suspect they don't believe very strongly that such a virus exists or is very dangerous. Real belief causes action.

So what are we to do with these people who claim to believe but don't appear to believe? If we go by Jesus' example, we are to love them to the point of taking on the

burdens of others. While our society may have claimed to be providing for all our wants and needs, an invisible virus is showing that may not be true. Our society is not as free as it claims. We are burdened with hate, with debt, with poorer quality health care than we've been led to believe; just to mention a few of society's burdens.

So let us lovingly help others in their burdens however we can. While some might argue that Jesus burdens us by calling us to give up our freedom, for those who embrace this path of love, they find his burden is lighter than that which the world imposes on us. Amen.

### Prayers

Called into unity with one another and the whole creation, let us pray for our shared world.

We pray for the church. Sustain us as we attempt to share your word in these times of physical distancing. Embrace us as we struggle to find our common ground. Lift up leaders with powerful and prophet voices. Free us from stagnant faith.

We pray for the well-being of creation. Protect the air, water, and land from abuse and pollution. Be with those who work to protect our environment. Free us from apathy in our care of creation and direct us toward sustainable living.

We pray for the nations of the earth. Guide leaders in developing just policies and guide difficult conversations. Free us from attitudes that hinder relationship-building. Lead us to expansive love for our neighbor.

We pray for all in need. For all who are tired, lonely, feeling despair, sick or oppressed. Take their yoke upon you and ease their burdens. Give your consolation to them and free us from all that keeps us bound.

We pray for those who are unemployed, underemployed or facing unemployment. Be with them in their anxiety, guide those who provide jobs and those who make the decisions regarding our economy. We ask that you will help and guide all affected through difficult financial times.

We give thanks for those who have died in faith, for their example to us. Welcome them into your eternal rest and comfort us in our grief until we are joined with them in new life.

Receive these prayers, O God, and those too deep for words; we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.