

New Hope Lutheran Church

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May 17, 2020

6th Sunday of Easter

**ALL EVENTS FOR THE COMING
WEEK HAVE BEEN CANCELLED EXCEPT**

May 29 @ 6:00pm Youth zoom meeting

Please remember to send in your offering.

*We now have a **donate button** on our web site nhlc.ca*

*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

Almighty and ever-living God, you hold together all things in heaven and on earth. In your great mercy receive the prayers of all your children, and give to all the world the Spirit of your truth and peace, we pray 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 17:22 – 31

22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. **23** For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. **24** "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. **25** And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. **26** From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. **27** God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. **28** 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.' **29** "Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone—an image made by human design and skill. **30** In the past God overlooked such ignorance, but now he commands all people everywhere to repent. **31** For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to everyone by raising him from the dead."

Psalm 66:8 – 20

8 Praise our God, all peoples, let the sound of his praise be heard; **9** he has preserved our lives and kept our feet from slipping. **10** For you, God, tested us; you refined us like silver. **11** You brought us into prison and laid burdens on our backs. **12** You let people ride over our heads; we went through fire and water, but you brought us to a place of abundance. **13** I will come to your temple with burnt offerings and fulfill my vows to you—**14** vows my lips promised and my mouth spoke when I was in trouble. **15** I will sacrifice fat animals to you and an offering of rams; I will offer bulls and goats. **16** Come and hear, all you who fear God; let me tell you what he has done for me. **17** I cried out to him with my mouth; his praise was on my tongue. **18** If I had cherished sin in my heart, the Lord would not have listened; **19** but God has surely listened and has heard my

prayer. **20** Praise be to God, who has not rejected my prayer or withheld his love from me!

Second Reading 1 Peter 3:13 – 22

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? **14** But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. "Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened." **15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. **17** For it is better, if it is God's will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. **18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit. **19** After being made alive, he went and made proclamation to the imprisoned spirits— **20** to those who were disobedient long ago when God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, **21** and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a clear conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, **22** who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.

Gospel John 14:15 – 21

15 "If you love me, keep my commands. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— **17** the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. **18** I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. **19** Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. **20** On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. **21** Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them."

May 17, 2020 – The 6th Sunday of Easter
“If You Love Me...”

How often have we heard the words; “*if you love me....*”, which was then followed by a request for something? “If you love me, you’ll take me on a fabulous vacation.” “If you love me you will buy me that car I am so taken with.” “If you love me you will do some chores for me.” Something we want to notice here is that the person who seems to benefit the most is the one making the request.

In our gospel today we hear something that sounds very similar from the mouth of Jesus, but in this case, it isn’t really a request, but more of a statement. Simply put, if we love Jesus, that love is automatically revealed by our following the commandments Jesus has outlined over the course of his ministry. Unlike the human request which is based on the person making the request (the requester?) getting something to benefit themselves, this statement is about something coming out of another’s love for us, that actually benefits us. We are the ones who gain something here.

We want to remember that the commandments Jesus refers to were put in place to benefit the people of God. They show us the boundaries between good and evil, the place that divides actions that are good for our well being, from actions that can cause us harm in a variety of ways, some with consequences we may never have imagined. And from time to time we all step over those lines, and I include myself in that, which is why I’m also familiar with unwanted consequences. Even when we tell ourselves that we didn’t mean for something to happen – perhaps the filter between our brain and our mouth was out for cleaning - we still have to deal with the consequences of our actions. Perhaps somebody was hurt in some way, physically, mentally, or spiritually.

The good news, of course, is that even when we overstep those boundaries, not all is lost, even if at times it can feel that way. In today’s gospel Jesus reminds us that we are not left orphaned. We are not on our own, left feeling helpless because, for those who love Jesus, the Advocate, the Spirit of truth, is available to help us out in those times we crossed a boundary, finding nothing but regret on the other side.

While it is true that we may still have to suffer consequences, the Holy Spirit helps us get through them, perhaps assisting us in finding ways of minimizing them, or

even turning them into a valuable resource. One way that can happen is through God’s forgiveness and knowing that while we may have hurt another, God is willing – because of the death and resurrection of Jesus – to grant us forgiveness. When we realize our mistakes and request it, God will forgive, and hopefully, we will also discover just how powerful the act of forgiveness is, and make wide use of it ourselves.

To know that we are not left orphaned is a wonderful feeling. It means that in spite of any pain we may have caused others, we are not only still able to seek redemption, but also able to view this love for Jesus from a variety of angles. God has loved us and shown it through the power of the resurrection. We are recipients of God’s loving forgiveness, even if we aren’t deserving. If we truly love God for all that has happened, why would we not want to share this wonderful news, and act on it as well? 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.

Abiding God, you have revealed yourself to us in the form of your Son, Jesus Christ. Embolden your church, as your followers, to reveal your love to everyone in our speaking and in our living. Bless us with strength and courage as we need it.

You are the creator of heaven and earth. Revitalize the health of oceans, rivers, lakes, springs, glaciers, and other bodies of water that give life to your creatures.

You call all people of the world your children. Judge the nations justly, show mercy to the oppressed, and speak truth to power through your prophets, as you did in days of old.

You come near to us when we are lost, and you hear our distress. We pray for those who suffer in any way, especially those who are ill, and those who are grieving.

Your commands are good and merciful. Give us courage to take hold of our baptismal promises to work for justice, advocate for the voiceless, and free the oppressed and imprisoned in body, mind, or spirit.

You remain with us always, O God, and your kingdom has no end. We remember the saints who have gone before us. Unite us forever in your final victory over death.

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