

New Hope Lutheran Church

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May 24, 2020

7th 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

God of glory, your Son Jesus Christ suffered for us and ascended to your right hand. Unite us with Christ and each other in suffering and in joy, that all the world may be drawn into your bountiful presence, we pray through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with your and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen.**

First Reading Acts 1:6 – 14

6 Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” **7** He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. **8** But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” **9** After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. **10** They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. **11** “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven.” **12** Then the apostles returned to Jerusalem from the hill called the Mount of Olives, a Sabbath day’s walk from the city. **13** When they arrived, they went upstairs to the room where they were staying. Those present were Peter, John, James and Andrew; Philip and Thomas, Bartholomew and Matthew; James son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot, and Judas son of James. **14** They all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

Psalm 68:1 – 10

1 May God arise, may his enemies be scattered; may his foes flee before him. **2** May you blow them away like smoke—as wax melts before the fire, may the wicked perish before God. **3** But may the righteous be glad and rejoice before God; may they be happy and joyful. **4** Sing to God, sing in praise of his name, extol him who rides on the clouds; rejoice before him—his name is the LORD. **5** A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. **6** God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land. **7** When you, God, went out before your people, when you marched through the wilderness, **8** the earth shook, the heavens poured down rain, before God, the One of Sinai, before God, the God of Israel. **9** You gave abundant showers, O God; you refreshed your weary inheritance. **10** Your people settled in it, and from your bounty, God, you provided for the poor.

Second Reading 1 Peter 4:12 – 14, 5:6 – 11

12 Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. **13** But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. **14** If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. **7** Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. **8** Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. **9** Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. **10** And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. **11** To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.

Gospel John 17:1 – 11

1 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. **2** For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. **3** Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. **4** I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. **5** And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. **6** “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. **7** Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. **8** For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. **9** I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. **10** All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. **11** I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one.

May 24, 2020 – The 7th Sunday of Easter
“A Life That Matters”

Today I want to address the young person in all of us, so think back, perhaps waaaaaay back. One thing that we can say we have in common is that we have all (at one time or another), been young.

And you may recall that one of the problems with being young is that the future so often seems to loom way ahead of us, unknown, and untested. We have very little to compare the future to when we are young. Young people can't say: “*Oh, this situation is just like 1985 all over again!*” And because of a lack of such reference, young people have this massive question about their lives, presented to them on a regular basis; “*what are you going to do with your life?*” If we think about it, it may not be the most intelligent question, because if we who are older were to think back to our own teen years, how well would our answer from back then compare to what actually happened?

Regardless of what our plans might be (or have been), nobody can say with absolute certainty that the direction they plan to go when they are young is going to be their entire life's undertaking. The question of what we are going to do with our lives can change many times – and that's ok. But we need some kind of a direction to start out with. And we often begin finding some direction by asking ourselves; what do we want out of life?

Now for most people there are two basic things we would like to get out of life. The first one is that **we would like to live comfortably**. And by that, I don't mean the kind of life where we can lounge around and do nothing. I mean the kind of life where we can have work that allows us to afford the things we need, with maybe a little left over. To live comfortably and contented is one thing that everyone wants to get out of life. That's something we aim for in the future.

The second thing we want out of life is to **live a life that matters**. I know on the surface, that can mean all kinds of different things to all kinds of people. Live a life that matters. So what do I mean by that?

Quite often we are led to believe that life matters only if we are happy with the way things are going. Or we are led to believe that life matters only when it's all about us. Or we are led to believe that life matters only when we are the most

important thing in that life, and it doesn't matter what others think or do, because we are going our own way.

The sad reality about all this is that when everyone thinks in those ways, we wind up with a lot of people who feel unhappy, who feel unwanted and unloved, who feel that they are practically worthless – regardless of how comfortably they are living. They are not looked up to, they aren't really respected, they are just... there. A lot of people come to the concluding feeling that – while they may be comfortable - all they do is exist; and there isn't a lot more to their lives than that.

And it's really too bad that people feel that way, because there could be so much more in everyone's life, and there could be many more people who go beyond existence, and actually live a life that matters.

As an example, I want to use some of our lessons today. Our gospel lesson has Jesus praying fervently for his disciples and followers. He knows his time on earth is limited, and he ends this portion of the prayer by asking that his followers may be one in heart and mind. There is nothing said about each of them going their own way or doing their own thing. They are still to be a community. So being part of something greater than yourself is one part of living a life that matters.

And the purpose of that community is explained in our first lesson where they are all gathered on the Mount of Olives, where Jesus gives his final farewell, and rises up to heaven. I think it's pretty important that Jesus doesn't tell them that they have accomplished a mission and they should now just go and live their lives. Instead he gives them a direction, he gives them a job to do, that they are to tell everyone and anyone about what has happened in the past years and how Jesus was revealed as being the Messiah everyone was waiting for. They have been given a direction, and that is the same direction Christians have been given ever since. Live the gospel message.

We should notice that after Jesus gave them direction and left, all of their lives took a drastic turn. Up until then, the disciples were always described as “ordinary”. There was nothing special about them. But after Jesus left them, and the Holy Spirit came upon them, they changed. They began to live lives that mattered. Life was not about them alone anymore – their wants, their needs - but rather about following Jesus' example and doing things for others. And because of that they mattered. Not to themselves, but more importantly to hundreds

and thousands of people. They mattered. And their lives mattered.

And that's how we too live lives that matter. Regardless of what we have done in the past or will do in the future, if we live our lives looking outward, to the needs and problems of others, we are going to find a life that matters. And the more we look to be like Jesus, the fuller we are going to find our lives becoming. Our lives matter most in what we do and how we influence others, not in what we do for ourselves.

None of us know for certain what the future holds, but if we have a direction, the direction Jesus shows us, we can be certain that regardless of what the future holds, we are going to be in good hands. God actually wants for us what we essentially want for us; that we live a contented life, and that we live a life that matters. And it's not a direction that ends at any certain point in our lives, but one that begins anew each and every day of our lives. Regardless of our age, we never outgrow the idea of living a life that matters. Make your life matter. 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.

O God, call your people to be one as you are one. Unite you church in the truth of your gospel, the love of our neighbor, and the call to proclaim your reign to all people.

Breathe life into your creation. Guide your people as we explore the mysteries of the universe. We pray for the work of scientists and mathematicians whose skill enriches our understanding, like Nicholas Copernicus and Leonard Euler, whom the church commemorates today. Bless them with your wisdom and guidance.

Make your justice known among the nations of the earth. Protect the vulnerable, especially in the numerous nations currently in crisis. Redirect those who use violence and greed as weapons.

Come to the aid of your children. We pray for those who are ill, those engulfed in grief, those without supportive families, and for all who are isolated, powerless, or afraid; that all may rest their anxieties in your care.

Give courage to all who embark on new ventures. We especially remember those who risk their lives to serve in our armed forces, and those who so recently died. Grant safety to those serving at home or abroad, and assure them of your never-failing strength.

Raise all your saints to eternal life. Until that day, we give you thanks for the faithful examples of those who have listened to your voice and now rest in 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.**