

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

September 20, 2020
16th 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.

Funeral Kaarina Laine 76 yrs



O God, you are the hope of the saints, the light that filled their hearts, the love that never failed them. Comfort those who mourn, especially the family of Kaarina Laine, and in your time bring us to our eternal home. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

First Reading Jonah 3:10 – 4:11

3:10 When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened.

4:1 But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. **2** He prayed to the LORD, “Isn’t this what I said, LORD, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to forestall by fleeing to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. **3** Now, LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.” **4** But the LORD replied, “Is it right for you to be angry?” **5** Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. **6** Then the LORD God provided a leafy plant and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. **7** But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the plant so that it withered. **8** When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.” **9** But God said to Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” “It is,” he said. “And I’m so angry I wish I were dead.” **10** But the LORD said, “You have been concerned about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. **11** And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left—and also many animals?”

Psalm 145:1 – 8

1 I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. **2** Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever. **3** Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. **4** One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. **5** They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. **6** They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. **7** They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. **8** The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

Second Reading Philippians 1:21 – 30

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. **22** If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! **23** I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; **24** but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. **25** Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, **26** so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me. **27** Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel **28** without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. **29** For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, **30** since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

Gospel Matthew 20:1 – 16

1 “For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire workers for his vineyard. **2** He agreed to pay them a denarius for the day and sent them into his vineyard. **3** “About nine in the morning he went out and saw others standing in the marketplace doing nothing. **4** He told them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.’ **5** So they went. “He went out again about noon and about three in the afternoon and did the same thing. **6** About five in the afternoon he went out and found still others standing around. He asked them, ‘Why have you been standing here all day long doing nothing?’ **7** “ ‘Because no one has hired us,’ they answered. “He said to them, ‘You also go and work in my vineyard.’ **8** “When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his foreman, ‘Call the workers and pay them their wages, beginning with the last ones hired and going on to the first.’ **9** “The workers who were hired about five in the afternoon came and each received a denarius. **10** So when those came who were hired first, they expected to receive more. But each one of them also received a denarius. **11** When they received it, they began to grumble against the landowner. **12** ‘These who were hired last worked only one hour,’ they said, ‘and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the work

and the heat of the day.’ **13** “But he answered one of them, ‘I am not being unfair to you, friend. Didn’t you agree to work for a denarius? **14** Take your pay and go. I want to give the one who was hired last the same as I gave you. **15** Don’t I have the right to do what I want with my own money? Or are you envious because I am generous?’ **16** “So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Prayer of the Day

Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual loving kindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

The 16th Sunday After Pentecost – September 20, 2020 “Not Fair?”

As we begin today, I want to give a word of thanks to all the Bishops and bishop’s assistants who have provided us with a number of sermons over the summer months. To be honest, I wasn’t sure about using them at first, which is why you missed out on a bunch back in June. But I came to see the wisdom of those that head up the ELCIC, that this pandemic actually has been tough on pastors, and they needed a break.

Imagine if you worked in a mine, blasting out the ore, and suddenly you were told that the world had run out of dynamite, but you need to continue onward anyway. It’s up to you to figure out how to continue to get the ore out, even though no one has ever taught you what you are to do in such a situation. It just doesn’t seem fair.

Back in March we had just begun a Lenten series I’d been wanting to do for a couple of years now, to look closely at projects being carried out by Lutheran World Relief, when our facilities were closed down. I had done a lot of preparation and planning, but to what end? Again, it just didn’t seem fair.

Before us today in the gospel we have the parable of the Workers in the Vineyard. By now this should be a familiar parable to us, and we have probably heard this as a message that it doesn’t matter when you finally get to work in God’s vineyard, you will be given the same reward as those who’ve been working there for the longest time. Not a bad message if you’re relatively new to the Christian faith, but for those who’ve

spent their entire lengthy lives involved in the faith, does it seem to be fair?

Such a mindset is also shown in our 1st lesson from the book of Jonah. If you recall the story, you might remember how Jonah was sent to the city of Nineveh against his better judgement to warn the people that if they didn’t shape up, God was going to smite them. So, quite unwillingly, with much grumbling, and after a detour into a whale, Jonah does as he is asked. He trots around the city for a few days warning people of their impending doom, and to his total amazement, the entire city has a change of heart. His conclusion is that God isn’t fair. Why should such absolutely evil people be allowed to exist?

This whole notion of fairness is a theme for us in today’s lessons and I’d like to approach it with a couple of questions. First of all, how are we to label what is or isn’t fair? What might be fair to one person, may seem unfair to another. To those in our parable who began the day at the beginning, they felt starting out that they were getting a fair deal. But somehow by the end of the day, that same wage had become unfair. Their problem was that they just felt they should receive more even though they had a prior agreement. They came to this conclusion after they compared themselves to those who had only worked a partial day. Their sense of fairness only applied to their own situation. Were they the best people to talk about what was or wasn’t fair?

The second question I want to ask is; who are we to judge what is or isn’t fair in God’s eyes? The landowner in today’s parable made it perfectly clear that he was the one who could choose to pay the workers what he felt was appropriate. The earliest workers received what they had expected. Who were they to judge the amount paid to those who came later?

This can be an important lesson for us as well. How often do we make ourselves judges of what is or isn’t fair? How often does our notion of fairness apply so that we are the ones who benefit? How often do we forget about God’s incredible love for all humans? Keep in mind that God created humans and, at the time of creation, declared them as being “good” in God’s eyes.

So what are we to do when we perceive something is unfair? I suppose we should first ask ourselves if we are the ones who benefit from our notion of fairness. Another way to look at it is to remind ourselves that joy may be found in the work itself, rather than the end reward only. That may be why

we miss our Sunday gatherings so much, and why we miss the choirs, and women’s group, the youth, and the numerous other times we gather as Christians to do God’s work.

There can actually be blessings discovered even when we feel life isn’t fair. Because life wasn’t fair after the closing of group gatherings, I wound up doing video Toolbox sermons, and I love doing them! Creating weekly Bible studies have been an interesting exercise for me. Any time I spend on the phone with you is not just a hellohowareyou moment anymore, but a precious time to hear your voice, especially if I haven’t heard it in a long time.

And in this time that hasn’t been fair for you either, you’ve been exposed to a variety of sermons from a variety of our leadership across the country. We’ve all come to a greater realization of how much our weekly gatherings mean to us. We’ve become aware of how precious a gift it is just to see and hear from family – not everyone has had that experience on a regular basis.

So could it be possible that when we feel God (or life) isn’t fair, we are actually being exposed to blessings we may never have thought of? Are we being shown just how wonderful our lives actually have been, and what is of real value to us? May God be with you in pondering those questions. Amen.

Prayers

Drawn together in the compassion of God, we pray for the church, the world, and all those in need.

Generous God, you make the last first, and the first last. Where this gospel challenges the church, equip it for its works of service. Strengthen those who suffer for Christ.

Sun and wind, bushes and worms, cattle and great cities – nothing in creation is outside your concern, mighty God. In your mercy, tend to it all. Give us a spirit of generosity toward all you have made.

Where we find envy and create enemies, you provide enough for all. Bring peace to places of conflict and violence. Inspire leaders with creativity and wisdom. Bless the work of negotiators, peacekeepers, and development workers.

Reveal yourself to all in need as you are gracious and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, ready to

relent from punishing. Accompany judges and lawyers, victims of crime and those serving sentences. Give fruitful labor and a livelihood to those seeking work.

Be with those who provide relief to the many who are in the midst of Hurricanes and forest fires. Look over those who are dealing with flooding, and those experiencing drought. We pray for relief and your word of comfort.

Even beyond our expectations, you choose to give generously. Grant life, health, and courage to all who are in need.

We praise you for the generations that have declared your power to us. Give us faithfulness to follow them, living for Christ, until you call us to join them in the joyful song around his throne.

All these things and whatever else you see that we need, we entrust to your mercy, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.