

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 27, 2020

17th 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 Sulevi Särkioja 88 yrs



Almighty God; you bring us hope in our times of grieving through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. May this hope be spread to all those who grieve today, especially the friends and family of Sulevi Särkioja, that they may find your comforting presence with them. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

First Reading Ezekiel 18:1 – 4, 25 – 32

1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 “What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: “ ‘The parents eat sour grapes, and the children’s teeth are set on edge’? 3 “As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. 4 For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.

25 “Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Hear, you Israelites: Is my way unjust? Is it not your ways that are unjust? 26 If a righteous person turns from their righteousness and commits sin, they will die for it; because of the sin they have committed they will die. 27 But if a wicked person turns away from the wickedness they have committed and does what is just and right, they will save their life. 28 Because they consider all the offenses they have committed and turn away from them, that person will surely live; they will not die. 29 Yet the Israelites say, ‘The way of the Lord is not just.’ Are my ways unjust, people of Israel? Is it not your ways that are unjust? 30

“Therefore, you Israelites, I will judge each of you according to your own ways, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent! Turn away from all your offenses; then sin will not be your downfall. 31 Rid yourselves of all the offenses you have committed, and get a new heart and a new spirit. Why will you die, people of Israel? 32 For I take no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Sovereign LORD. Repent and live!

Psalms 25:1 – 9

1 In you, LORD my God, I put my trust. 2 I trust in you; do not let me be put to shame, nor let my enemies triumph over me. 3 No one who hopes in you will ever be put to shame, but shame will come on those who are treacherous without cause. 4 Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. 5 Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in you all day long. 6 Remember, LORD, your great mercy and love, for they are from of old. 7 Do not remember the sins of my youth and my rebellious ways; according to your love remember me, for you, LORD, are good. 8 Good and upright is the LORD; therefore he instructs sinners in his ways. 9 He guides the humble in what is right and teaches them his way.

Second Reading Philippians 2:1 – 13

1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing

in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. 12 Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill his good purpose.

Gospel Matthew 21:23 – 32

23 Jesus entered the temple courts, and, while he was teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him. “By what authority are you doing these things?” they asked. “And who gave you this authority?” 24 Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one question. If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 25 John’s baptism—where did it come from? Was it from heaven, or of human origin?” They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Then why didn’t you believe him?’ 26 But if we say, ‘Of human origin’—we are afraid of the people, for they all hold that John was a prophet.” 27 So they answered Jesus, “We don’t know.” Then he said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things. 28 “What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ 29 “ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. 30 “Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. 31 “Which of the two did what his father wanted?” “The first,” they answered. Jesus said to them, “Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the

prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you. **32** For John came to you to show you the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes did. And even after you saw this, you did not repent and believe him.

Prayer of the Day

God of love, giver of life, you know our frailties and failings. Give us your grace to overcome them, keep us from those things that harm us, and guide us in the way of salvation, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

September 27, 2020 – 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Taking Responsibility

In our first lesson for today, the prophet Ezekiel begins by attacking a premise the people of Israel seem to have adopted; that their misery is a result of another generations sin. What's interesting is that we see the same sort of thing today when we discuss topics like global warming. If our forefathers would have been a bit more on the ball regarding pollution, then we wouldn't have a problem. Or at least not as much of a problem.

You can use that same argument in the context of indigenous relations. If former politicians – whose statues are these days being torn down or defaced – would have had enacted fairer laws, then we wouldn't have the discriminatory problems we face today, or at least it wouldn't be as bad. Using such logic, we can reason that none of today's problems are our fault, they are the fault of someone else, so why should we take any responsibility?

I wonder if we blame others because that's what we have become conditioned to do. If a car has multiple problems, don't we blame the manufacturer? It really doesn't matter if we neglect the vehicle, fail to do maintenance, or drive it like a maniac. We tend to blame "they", as in, "*they built a piece of junk.*" Blame someone else.

It could be that I notice such things because, from an early age, my father instilled in us children that we were to blame for all the bad things that happened to us. In my case, it was always my fault, even if I didn't think it was always my fault, perhaps because someone had talked me into doing something

stupid, and I had followed, simply out of the urge to be accepted by someone. While I have long since come to realize that while it wasn't the healthiest way to be brought up, it also got me to often mull over how the choices I make today can have drastic consequences for tomorrow. It has kept me humble thinking in the back of my mind that I still may be (at least partly) to blame for things like global warming, or injustice to indigenous peoples whenever I'm upholding the status quo. Regardless of what happened in the past, I have a responsibility for my actions today.

In many ways this is what the words from the prophet Ezekiel are also talking about. In this text, the prophet is speaking directly on behalf of God, and the words aren't pretty. We are to be held responsible for our actions, regardless of what the forebearers or anyone else did to convince us we are on the right path. We need to examine and re-examine our motives for the ways we behave now.

This is why it is so important for us to study the Bible for ourselves. One of the assets of the Bible is that it speaks the word of God to generation after generation, speaking to each generation's unique problems and difficulties. While some issues were viewed differently by past generations, and their views were handed down to us, our responsibility is to address today's issues by deciphering what God is saying to us today.

Take creation for example. For thousands of years people lived by the mantra from Genesis 1:28 where English versions often tell us that humans are to "have dominion" over all living creatures. This was taken to mean that we do whatever is needed to sustain ourselves with food, clothing, and housing. And we did so with such great gusto that Adam and Eve would never recognize our lifestyles, probably thinking we are some sort of gods.

Unfortunately in the process, we have in more recent times also caused harm to the earth, and continue to do so using an understanding from the Bible that applied to other generations. When I read from a more modern version of scripture, such as "The Message", the translation changes from "having dominion", to "being responsible" for the earth and its creatures. We are slowly coming to understand that "having dominion" does not mean the same thing as "pillaging". But more on that next week.

The point here is that, to be responsible followers, we need to read the Bible for ourselves. We need to grasp what

God is telling us today. Our forebearers heard the Bible tell them what they needed to know in their time, and we need to grasp what it is telling us in our own time. That is why reading and studying the Bible for ourselves is a responsible thing to do.

I think that is also why our national Bishop, Susan Johnson, is encouraging us to take the coming year and read our Bibles. You may recall that last year she encouraged us to renew our prayer lives, and be more engaged in prayer. This year we are encouraged to read, and specifically read studiously our scriptures. Not that we are to let up on our prayers, please keep them coming, because we are in the process of reclaiming our Christian heritage, and all the benefits and responsibilities that come with it. While we offer you our own Bible studies from our web page, if you want to be part of a national Bible study, a Bible book club, visit elcic.ca/LivingOurFaith to join. They focus on one book a month and offer study questions to help us along.

Our role as Christians in this world is not to shift blame for our problems, difficulties, or concerns to others, even if they have roots in another time or place. Our concern is to be responsible for our actions in the here and now. Think of it in terms of the Corona virus. It may have begun somewhere else before it arrived here. But does that mean all responsibility for it – our own care, our own safety – should be in the hands of those where it began? While there is nothing we can do anymore to prevent its appearance, shouldn't we be responsible now that it has arrived?

God wants to save us, to redeem us, and to sustain us. Through responsible study of scripture, we are allowed a peek into what we can do to allow all that to happen. May God bless our efforts at being responsible. Amen.

Prayers

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

In all the world, give your church unity. Inspire all the baptized with the mind of Christ. Where the church is powerful

and where it struggles, shape us with humility and obedience so that your love may be at work in us.

Your Son took on all of bodily life in our world, even to death. Preserve and keep your creation, O God. Mend and redeem places that are polluted and damaged, so that all of creation confesses you as Lord.

Turn the nations toward life. Where our ways are unfair, give us new hearts and new spirits. Where sin permeates our cultures and institutions, change our minds and teach us to trust your authority.

Our lives are yours, O God. Relieve the suffering of those who are ill in body, mind, or spirit. Defend the lives and welfare of children who are abused or neglected, hungry or exploited, bullied or lonely.

Turn this congregation away from our own interests toward the interests of others. Fill us with your compassion and sympathy. Bless ministries of care in our community; make us into signs of your mercy and justice for our neighbors.

Give strength and hope to the victims of natural disasters around the world. Be with those striving to extinguish wildfires, as well as those cleaning up after hurricanes while preparing for the next one. Bless them with the knowledge that their efforts are not in vain, and the hope that their lives can be normalized.

Thank you for those who have gone into the kingdom ahead of us – tax collectors and prostitutes, likely and unlikely, obedient and slow to learn. By their witness, teach us to confess Jesus Christ as Lord in life and in death.

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

Amen.