

# Spirit of Hope

Mount Hope Lutheran Church

Preschool and Childcare

March 30, 2020

***For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and his faithfulness continues to each generation. Psalm 100:5 NLT***

As I prepare this note for the final days of March and the first week of April, we learn that the president is lengthening the current restrictions to continue the entire month of April. Last week we heard the president expressing his desire to begin opening the country back up by Easter, but that has changed due to the continued spread of COVID-19. So, we know that this, “new normal” for our lives and for Mount Hope, will continue for at least another month.

I’d like to share a daily devotion from our Lenten study, authored by Pastor Michael Hoy:

***The Man of Hope, “Behold the man!” John 19:5***

Hoy writes,

*Jesus, beaten and wearied, stands publicly before all wearing a crown of thorns and a purple robe. Is it meant only to mock him for the charge that he was a king for his people? Is it meant to elicit sympathy from a hardened crowd that only cried for his death? Are we to see here some poor hapless fellow like so many, shamed and tortured by their oppressors? Or are we to behold something more in this moment? Is Jesus now publicly displayed as the One people longed to embrace – the Messiah who will save us?*

*Jesus the man of hope for us not because he shirks from the scars of suffering. He is the man of hope precisely because he places himself in the midst of our suffering. He takes our sins with him in his path toward the cross. We may behold that the garments of royalty are a prelude to his coming into his kingdom for us and for all people in their suffering and death. For all who journey through the time of trial, trusting Christ as their Lord and Savior, there is a crown of righteousness laid up for them. Behold, the man – of hope!*

***Lord, may we behold you, suffering on our behalf, as our hope in the midst of our sufferings. Amen.*** Yes, Jesus is our hope!

The newsletter continues now.

These words from last week grow in their importance with each passing day. **Thank you for being there for each other in our Mount Hope family.** I know that contact and connections are continuing through social media, phone calls, mail, and such. Please continue and let us know how we can help and serve you. The church office is staffed, and our contact information is on our website, [mthopelutheran.org](http://mthopelutheran.org).

For this week, we have again included material to continue to work through our Lenten study, *By His wounds, We are Healed*. There is a children's message, sermon, and prayers provided. Also, there is a message for some time this week. Please work through this with your family or maybe even someone on the phone or online. **Please remember to give.** Your offerings are needed for the mission of Mount Hope to continue. You may mail in or give through the "Giving" link.

Finally, our website includes a growing selection of sermons, [mthopelutheran.org/sermons](http://mthopelutheran.org/sermons). The worship service from yesterday, March 29 at St. Michael's is there as well as live worship from Mount Hope with Christina. There is also a message I recorded for the day. Also, if you haven't already done so, look for the email with information on subscribing to our YouTube page. We continue to put content there, including *Five with Fran*, a short time of Scripture and prayer. We are currently planning our Easter service and how we might best celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord. Please keep an eye on the website for updates and information. Please continue to pray for Mount Hope, our country, the leadership, and our world that COVID-19 will be conquered.

Serving together,  
Pastor Fran Green

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It remains uncertain of how long it will be till we can all worship together again. With the schools closed, our preschool has also closed. The daycare is one of the things that is essential, so that continues.

With that in mind the Governing Board has decided that we needed to cut back on expenses. The part-time workers for the Center are no longer working. Candy, our Admin. Assistant is not working. Hours for the Childcare teachers, Kim, Christina, and Pastor Fran have been reduced by 25%

As expenses continue, your gifts for God's Ministry here at Mount Hope are needed. The ways of giving are online or mailing to the church office. We have enough funds to cover the end of the month's payroll and the mortgage.

Thank you for your giving so far.

Blessings,  
Bob Tolzin, President of Mt. Hope

# By His Wounds We Are Healed

## A Series of Services for the Season of Lent

### The Wounds of Stealing - Sermon

The commandment that prohibits stealing addresses more than the matter of our paying taxes. The commandment encourages us to look out for our neighbors and their welfare through love and justice on their behalf.

The false charge against Jesus that he forbade the payment of taxes to the emperor was only an attempt by dishonest spies who sought to trap Jesus. At the trial of Jesus before Pilate they would try to use this incident as an attempt to make Jesus out to be a revolutionary figure. But Jesus silenced their craftiness by saying to them, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25).

Jesus did not steal, but his mission was certainly revolutionary. Yet his calling us to give "to God the things that are God's" is at least partially an indictment for all the ways in which we have stolen from God.

In the culture in which we live, stealing is more and more becoming a common-day occurrence. People today have not only to be protected from being taken advantage of for what are truly their possessions, but even to have their own identity protected. Entitlement, greed, selfishness, and unequal wealth distribution reign supreme among the "haves," while the "have nots" among the poor and hungry continue to go without. It is not hard to find evidence for all the ways people look out only for themselves, and at the same time take advantage of their neighbors. That is what stealing is: taking advantage of others, acquiring from others by unjust means. The just judgment for this would be more than we could ever bear.

Jesus took his place in the middle of two thieves, himself crucified as a criminal. True, he did not steal, and he did not commit a crime. But he suffered as one who did. He suffered and died for us. The very heart of God is wounded in the death of Jesus for the sins of the world. But by his wounds, we are healed.

The healing that God brings to us through Christ frees our hearts and our lives from judgment. We trust that because of Jesus we are no longer regarded as the criminals with whom Jesus associated even in death but as children of the heavenly Father, graced deeply and daily by God's love.

In the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15), the son who sought his father's inheritance essentially wished his father to be dead so that he could take his portion and live on his own. As we know from the parable, that plan didn't work out very well for the son. The son comes home with a sense of his wrong doing, his theft from the father's good graces. But the father is extravagant in grace upon the son's return, running to him and embracing him. and throwing a feast in his honor.

The elder son knew this younger son only as a thief of the father's property. His heart was cold to both the merciful father and the son who was welcomed home. But even though this elder son is without mercy, the father has an abundance. God welcomes home all of us who are thieves and criminals, living in ways that are contrary to his will. We all get to come home in mercy that does not leave us in the judgment of death. This mercy reaches out to the elder son as well, seeking to melt his cold heart with the mercy of God's abundant gifts.

The healing of Jesus' wounds empowers us to be agents of love for our neighbors. We get to take our place with them, among them, for their good and for their well-being. We get to look out for our neighbors, trusting that God is doing all the looking out for us. Instead of looking over our shoulder, we can be people using the head on our shoulders to imagine ways of greater giving and goodness for others. As Jesus would say in his Sermon on the Mount, "Do not resist an evildoer," but "give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you" (Matthew 5:39-42). We are givers because of the gift we have received in Jesus.

Near the end of the gospel of Matthew, we hear a parable about the sheep and the goats (chapter 25). The goats are those who have spent their lives butting out others from the trough, seeking to get to the head of the line, and not caring all that much about the poor sheep they have butted out of the way or trampled underfoot. The sheep, on the other hand, have looked out for all others—yes, the sheep, but even the goats!— provide for their neighbors as needs arise. The parable is not meant for us to reduce its meaning to sheer moralism. It is a parable of faith. Those who trust in Jesus live and move like "little Christs" in the world caring for the many needs of people. They see their neighbors as important, treasures in God's eyes, creatures and children of the one God who has given them to us to love.

This sharing of love, even at the cost of personal wounds to us, is the giving "to God the things that are God's." Jesus did this for us. We get to live as the ambassadors of his love for others.

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# The Wounds of Stealing - Prayers

- The Prayers are spoken responsively by members of family or individually:
- P Let us pray for the Church, for all in need, and for the whole of God’s creation. That throughout these forty days of Lent, you may give your people hope that it is Jesus, our Lord, who leads the way and takes into his body on the cross the sins of the whole world.
- C **Heal us, O God.**
- P For all that you provide us in this life and for all that you provide for all people everywhere, that we may put away envy and be grateful for your gifts.
- C **Heal us, O God.**
- P That we may recognize those in need, especially the hungry and the poor, pray for them, work for change in government for their good, and seek to uphold them from the resources of our own charity.
- C **Heal us, O God.**
- P That those who are sick or suffering may be blessed with better health and wholeness.
- C **Heal us, O God.**
- P For those who are dying, that, leaving all their earthly things behind, they may come to embrace the greater treasures in your eternal presence.
- C **Heal us, O God.**
- P Into your healing, wounded hands for our sake, we commend all for whom we pray.
- C **By Christ’s wounds, we are healed. Amen.**

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## The Wounds of Stealing - Children’s Message

The Children’s Message is delivered by a parent or other adult:

**P** Can I tell you a story? Once my oldest son got really mad at his younger brother. The younger brother was always going into his room and picking up one of the older brother’s toys. Has that ever happened to you? (Listen for answers.) Anyway, the older son cried out to me, “Dad, my brother just stole this from me!” So, I sat both of the boys down together, and we had a little talk. I talked to them about what it means to be brothers. To be brothers means to care for one another and to respect one another. And, yes, that means respecting each other’s things, but more importantly, to respect each other as people whom God very deeply loves. God is the source and giver of all gifts, even everything we have. In sending Jesus, God didn’t seek to keep the riches of the kingdom locked up in heaven, but to give them away—even in giving his Son for us all.

**Let us pray.** Lord God, help us to be people who see all other people as our brothers and sisters in this world in need of your love and care. Amen.

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# Faith 5

*“Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled: Death is swallowed up in **victory**.” 1 Corinthians 15:54*

1 Corinthians chapter 15 – one of my favorite, one of the most powerful sections of Scripture describing the Story of God’s people. The section of Scripture that answers so many of the questions people have about Jesus, His resurrection, questions about Christianity and such. (If there is a God, why do we have to die? Why did Jesus have to die? Why is there so much trouble in the world? And so on...)

This section of Scripture is vital in that it connects us, all believers to the Story of God and His action in the world. Paul is trying to get the Corinthians to understand where they are, and who they are, in God’s long story. Paul is afraid that the Corinthians are forgetting their roots – roots they have because they have believed in Jesus. WE SEE THE SAME THING HAPPENING TODAY IN OUR OWN COUNTRY. People do not know who they are, they do not know God’s story. Where are people searching for hope in this time of COVID-19? Far too many people know nothing of the **victory**.

I have been reminded of this many times in my life. As an example, a while back on a trip out to the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs for a memorial service of a friend, I was confronted with the sad reality of so many not knowing and sharing in the victory of Jesus. Doug and I had served together on the Air Force Parachute Team, The Wings of Blue.

Our small group of 40-50 met at the parachute flight at the airfield of the Air Force Academy for a small ceremony. The family specifically stated, **no religion**. No words from a chaplain or pastor, no prayers, etc. Nothing!! We will eat, tell a few stories about Doug, spread his ashes and that’s it. I mean, I guess I wasn’t surprised, but my friend Mark offered to at least have a chaplain say a few words. “No, no religion.”

Now a few people spoke, sharing about what a wonderful man Doug was and how he will live on, whatever that means. We all walked out to the drop zone area, one of the guys who was closest to Doug, said a few words stating that he and Doug had talked at length about their deaths and final wishes, etc. Doug said, please don’t do anything special, just scatter my ashes at the drop zone and NO RELIGION. Well, Lizard continued, “I am not a religious man either and so if any of you happen to be please pray now.” They were all crying...He spread the ashes and we all walked away. That’s it. My friend Mark asked me, well did you say something, Yes, I did. His wife said I hope you blessed him or something, we don’t know where he may end up.

So frustrating. Feeling powerless. I mean, what is one to do? Have you ever been there? We have the victory, we know where there is hope. I wasn’t sure why I was even there or if I should be associated with something so tragic; but, I felt I needed to be. A ministry of presence perhaps. Let’s look a little closer at 1 Corinthians 15:50:

**What I am saying, dear brothers and sisters, is that our physical bodies cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. These dying bodies cannot inherit what will last forever.**

We are born sinful and unclean. Under the curse of Genesis 3. This is our beginning, showing us who we are. After spending the entire chapter telling us that Jesus died, he truly died because that is the only way for death to be conquered. God in Jesus lived perfectly, taking all the punishment of sinful mankind. Then he rose from the dead conquering death, breaking the curse, opening the way to new life. Only He could do this; only the perfect God-Man was able to do this. That is what Paul has been arguing this entire chapter. Now he begins to proclaim what this means for us.

**But let me reveal to you a wonderful secret. We will not all die, but we will all be transformed! It will happen in a moment, in the blink of an eye, when the last trumpet sounds, those who have died will be raised to live forever. And we who are living will also be transformed. For our dying bodies must be transformed into bodies that will never die; our mortal bodies must be transformed into immortal bodies. (51-53)**

These bodies are under the curse, they cannot dwell in the Lord's presence. But don't worry; they will be transformed; you will receive a new body. A real body – one that will never die. Now, that's exciting isn't it?

**Then, when our dying bodies have been transformed into bodies that will never die, this Scripture will be fulfilled (Isaiah 25): Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?**

**For sin is the sting that results in death, (we die because we are born sinful, we are born under the curse), and the law gives sin its power. (We cannot free ourselves – we cannot save ourselves). But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. (54-57)**

Death has claimed a victory, and the world seems to shrug its shoulders and acknowledge it. "Well, that's it...Some hope that this isn't all there is...But, I don't know..."

The Christian Message, our Story, is that God has already done it. Death and decay will be gone, swallowed up forever. God has given us the victory over all the powers that drag us down, he will give it to us in the future, and he is giving it to us here and now. Yes, it is our future hope; however, it is true in the present as well. It is true in the here and now

**V. 58, Always work enthusiastically for the Lord, for you know that nothing you do for the Lord is ever useless.** We are empowered by the Holy Spirit for the here and now as well. It will not be useless. God is redeeming the world through the church, through His people.

Yet we know that the battle rages on. John Eldredge writes these words in his book EPIC:

Rescuing the human heart is the hardest mission in the world. The dilemma of the Story is this: we don't know if we want to be rescued. We are so enamored with our small stories and our false gods; we are so bound up in our addictions and our self-centeredness and take-it-for-granted unbelief that we don't even know how to cry out for help. And the Evil One has no intention of letting his captives walk away scot-free. He seduces us, deceives us, assaults us – whatever it takes to keep us in darkness.

**But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Just like Paul in today's reading, we are all called to take our place in Jesus' Story, to share that story. It is the announcement of a love that has changed the world, a love that takes the people who find themselves loved like this and sends them off to live and work in a totally new way. WE NEED TO BE LEAVING A LEGACY! SHARING THE VICTORY! Our world is especially ripe right now, amidst COVID-19, to hear the wonderful story of The Victory!

How will you pass that legacy on? This is our most important mission or legacy in life. To be ambassadors for the Lord. Sharing His message, the victory. I have one challenge today again and that is to begin this legacy in your very own homes. I know many of you already do read the Scriptures, pray, and such in your homes. That's great! I know many also, "not so much". I would encourage all of us to try the following out. Establish something new, and/or add to what you are currently doing. (Please see the enclosed bookmark, which outlines/guides the following). **Faith 5 – Faith Inkubators**

Just before the first person in your house is going to turn in for the night, a family huddle is called. Gather everyone together. (If you live alone, why not call a friend or family member? You could also get online with another person, Facetime, Skype, etc.). Turn off all electronics, tv, phones, computers. Then simply share your highs and lows with each other. What was the best part of your day? What was not so good?

Then read a verse or two of Scripture. Talk about how this Scripture may or may not relate to highs and lows of the day. Next pray for each other. This doesn't have to be some fancy, drawn out deal. Simply thank God for the day, perhaps pray for a low or struggle. Finally, the last thing you do is bless one another. Again, this doesn't have to be formal and fancy. "Jesus loves you." , "May the Lord Bless you." Etc. That's it. Please try this and give it some time. This little habit will help us grow to be more confident in sharing the victory outside our homes as well. **THE LEGACY WILL BE AMAZING!!!**

**But thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ. AMEN**

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**THOSE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER VIA EMAIL SHOULD WATCH THEIR MAILBOX FOR FAITH 5 BOOKMARKS.**



# ***Celebration Days***

## **Happy Birthday**

5 Ashley Cleveland  
16 Tricia Mack  
19 Renata Melby  
19 Linda Quittschreiber  
20 Chris Nazy  
20 Kim Kunkel  
21 Ramona Duncan  
22 Tim Wuebke  
23 Randy Lingen  
24 Andrew Nazy

## **Baptism Anniversary**

1 Caleb Mack  
8 Eunice Marose  
15 Darlene Buelow  
16 Maria Killam  
25 Rev John Stern

## **Wedding Anniversary**

11 Greg and Janice Elbert

# *April Daily Devotions*

April 1	Ex 18:5—27	Heb 12:1—24	
April 2	Ex 19:1—25	Heb 13:1—21	
April 3	Ex 20:1—24	Luke 4:1—15	
April 4	Ex 22:20—23:13	Luke 4:16—30	
April 5	Ex 23:14—33	Luke 4:31—44	
April 6	Ex 24:1—18	Luke 5:1—16	
April 7	Ex 25:1—22	Luke 5:17—39	Ex 25:23—30:38
April 8	Ex 31:1—18	Luke 6:1—19	
April 9	Ex 32:1—14	Luke 6:20—38	
April 10	Ex 32:15—35	Luke 6:39—49	
April 11	Ex 33:1—23	Luke 7:1—17	
April 12	Ex 34:1—28	Luke 7:18—35	
April 13	Ex 34:29—35:21	Luke 7:36—50	Ex 35:22—38:20
April 14	Ex 38:21—39:8, 22—23, 27—31	Luke 8:1—21	
April 15	Ex 39:32—40:16	Luke 8:22—39	
April 16	Ex 40:17—38	Luke 8:40—56	Lev 1:1—7:38
April 17	Lev 8:1—13, 30—36	Luke 9:1—17	
April 18	Lev 9:1—24	Luke 9:18—36	
April 19	Lev 10:1—20	Luke 9:37—62	Lev 11:1—15:33
April 20	Lev 16:1—24	Luke 10:1—22	
April 21	Lev 17:1—16	Luke 10:23—42	
April 22	Lev 18:1—7, 20—19:8	Luke 11:1—13	
April 23	Lev 19:9—18, 26—37	Luke 11:14—36	
April 24	Lev 20:1—16, 22—27	Luke 11:37—54	
April 25	Lev 21:1—24	Luke 12:1—12	
April 26	Lev 23:1—22	Luke 12:13—34	
April 27	Lev 23:23—44	Luke 12:35—53	
April 28	Lev 24:1—23	Luke 12:54—13:17	Lev 25:1—55
April 29	Lev 26:1—20	Luke 13:18—35	
April 30	Lev 26:21—33, 39—44	Luke 14:1—24	Num 1:1—2:34

## Sunday Worship Schedule

8:15am Traditional Worship Service  
9:30am Connecting Hour  
Bible Study / Sunday School  
10:45am Praise Worship Service

**Phone:** 952-888-5059

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## Mount Hope's Staff

Fran Green	Pastor
Candy Frein	Administrative Assistant
Christina Brantner	Music Director
Kathy Sundseth	Custodian
Kim Wuebke	Preschool and Childcare Director
	Administrative Assistant
Steve Sundseth	Custodian
Sam Killam	Custodian

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Address Service Requested

