

Spirit of Hope

Mount Hope Lutheran Church

Preschool and Childcare

June 3, 2020

One of the teachers of religious law was standing there listening to the debate. He realized that Jesus had answered well, so he asked, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these." Mark 12:28-31 (NLT)

What a week! Eleven weeks of lockdown and then the murder of George Floyd. Tensions were already high and now? I have heard, as I'm sure you have as well, many "wise" and thoughtful commentaries on systemic racism, poverty, white supremacy, segregation, and all of the other factors involved; I find myself needing to pause and pray, *Lord, have mercy*. May we be a voice of love and peace that grows out of our love of Jesus, our loving Savior.

I know that people asking how to help provide food and other necessities, as well as assisting with clean up. We will share opportunities to serve as we learn of them; also, please let us know of ways that you hear so that we can share with our Mount Hope family as well.

Mount Hope updates: Effective June 1, 2020, our Administrative Assistant, Candy Frein resigned stating that she is ready to "retire again". We are grateful for the years of service Candy has given to Mount Hope, and we look forward to being able to celebrate appropriately, in-person, at some point in the future. Thank you, Candy!

Mount Hope has hired Jennifer Adamek to work with Kim Wobke, our Preschool and Childcare Director, in covering the duties of Administrative Assistant and to also serve as Administrative Assistant for our growing online worship service and other electronic media. Jennifer will work closely with Christina Brantner, our Worship Director, and myself in growing our online presence.

Our first day of offering the Lord's Supper went very well. If you would like to receive communion, please contact the church office to set up an appointment. Currently, we have hours available on Thursdays.

We continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and plan to continue to take things slowly. We trust the Lord to direct our plans and know that He will make it clear when it is safe for us to resume in-person worship.

Please continue to pray for Mount Hope, our city, country, the leadership, those on the frontlines battling during these challenging times and our world!! We continue to pray for the day we will be able to SAFELY worship together again.

Serving together,
Pastor Fran Green

The Message

Wondering Leads to Wandering

A few years ago, I was out in Colorado at a friend's retirement ceremony from the Air Force. The day after the event he took me and showed me around the Parachute Flight building where we had served together. As we walked, he was pointing at pictures hanging on the wall of former team members telling me their whereabouts and providing updates as he knew them. The last picture he showed me was of a young cadet who we both thought very highly of and knew was destined for greatness. He was a bold young leader who impressed

all who were associated with him. “Remember him?” “Of course”, “He’s dead”. “What?” “Yep, flew his B1 Bomber into the side of a mountain.”

I couldn’t believe it. It seems that the crew was out on a routine night training mission flying about 300 ft. below a ridge line. 28 seconds before impact they made a left turn towards the ridge; 13 seconds before impact, the automatic terrain following system (the auto pilot) generated a fly up. The crew members interrupted the feature; they turned it off, ignoring the warnings and flew right into the side of the ridge. Accident reports obviously attribute the cause of the crash to pilot error. I wonder why they would do such a thing. I wonder why they would seemingly question the auto pilot, which was obviously correct.

Do you ever question things? Of course, right? It is certainly healthy and appropriate to question, but just like the auto pilot in the B1, when it comes to our Lord, there is absolutely no reason to question his Word and all it includes. In fact, we can see in his Word that questioning the Lord often comes with dire consequences. It is really like my friend turning off the auto pilot, isn’t it? We can trust that God knows what is best for us; we can trust his promises. Wondering leads to wandering and wandering can be fatal!

We can see the same thing with the people of God. There is so much we can learn from the Scriptures and stories of His people. We return to the people of God during the Exodus. You may remember we talked about this story a few weeks ago. The people are at the Promised Land. They have seen and lived under God’s provision, His fulfillment of all His promises. All they had left to do was a bit of reconnaissance, go and possess the land that the Lord had promised. *Numbers 13:1,*

The Lord said to Moses, “Send some men to explore the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites. From each ancestral tribe send one of its leaders.”

It was a done deal? The Lord said I am giving it to you. He didn’t say go and check out the land and see if you might be able to conquer it. Let’s skip down to *verse 25* after the spies return:

At the end of forty days they returned from exploring the land. They came back to Moses and Aaron and the whole Israelite community at Kadesh in the desert of Paran. There they reported to them and to the whole assembly and showed them the fruit of the land. They gave Moses this account: “we went into the land to which you

sent us, and it does flow with milk and honey! Here is its fruit. But the people who live there are powerful, and the cities are fortified and very large. We even saw descendants of Anak there. The Amalekites live in the Negev; the Hittites, Jebusites and Amorites live in the hill country; and the Canaanites live near the sea and along the Jordan.” Then Caleb silenced the people before Moses and said, “We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it.” (V. 25-30)

The land was indeed as God had promised. The commission was to bring an objective report back to Moses and the people; of course, everything was just as the Lord said. Ten of the twelve spies, not Caleb or Joshua, decided to offer a subjective report. They began to wonder and wondering as we shall see leads to wandering. They viewed the taking of the land thinking about their own abilities, not God’s supernatural ability. They didn’t trust their auto pilot.

Have you ever got caught up in a wave of negativity? Pessimism, doom and gloom spreads like wildfire doesn’t it. That’s exactly what happens with the nation of Israel. Let’s move on to *Numbers chapter 14*:

That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, “If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! Why is the Lord bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn’t it be better for us to go back to Egypt?” And they said to each other, “We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt.” (V. 1-4)

Wow, remember what the Lord said in *Exodus 3* to Moses? *“I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them from the hand of the Egyptians.”* How quickly they forget! They wanted to go back! Apparently, their fear of the unknown was greater than the known misery in Egypt. This was the second major apostasy or rejection of God, the first being the Golden Calf at Mount Sinai. Of course, that doesn’t even include all of the other complaints and grumbling along the way. The failure here is the climax of a series of failures on the part of Israel. They had developed a pattern of sin. The Lord is angry:

“How long will these people treat me with contempt? How long will they refuse to believe in me, in spite of all the miraculous signs I have performed among them? I will strike them down with a plague and destroy them, but I will make you into a great nation greater and stronger than they.” (V. 11-12)

The Lord is gracious and merciful; he will not strike them down or force them to go and possess the land. He will now send them back out into the wilderness. Their wondering leads to wandering. The adults will die in the wilderness of old age instead of in Canaan, which was their fear. The people were fearful and did not want to enter the Promised Land. God granted them their wish, now they will wander for forty years until they die then the children will inherit the land along with Caleb and Joshua. The ten spies who wondered and doubted were struck down by a plague.

The people’s failure was not in recognizing the difficulties and seemingly impossible conquest of the Promised Land that was fact. Their failure was their lack of faith and trust in the Lord God. They failed by putting their trust in the judgment of men rather than in the Word of God. God promised them the land. Two men walked by faith, Caleb and Joshua, while the others walked by sight. The land was too well guarded, the people were giants, and it appeared that it could not be conquered.

The Israelites had lived where God had provided food and water for a multitude and their cattle. They experienced God’s guidance and protection. They also witnessed God’s wrath after the worship of the golden calf. God literally performed miracles daily for the care of his chosen ones. In spite of all of this, they wondered...they questioned God’s continued protection and provision. I wonder too.

I wonder what challenges God places before us. Where do you struggle to obey God? Where are you not trusting God? Where are you failing to believe? In what areas are you wondering about God’s faithfulness and ability to come through? There is certainly plenty of choices in our world today!

Matthew Henry wrote:

“Difficulties in the way of salvation dwindle and vanish before a lively, active faith in the power and promise of God. All things are possible, if they are promised, to him that believes.”

We can certainly trust God – He promised Abraham a land, a mighty nation, and that he would be a blessing, and He kept the promise. He promised David that one of his descendants would rule forever. He kept that promise. He promised to save us from our sin and free us from the power of Satan. He did that in Jesus. God keeps His promises, so we can trust what He tells us to do – like trusting the autopilot!

Hebrews 11:6 says And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Yes, unbelief overlooks the promises and power of God! It magnifies every danger and difficulty; unbelief fills the heart with discouragement. Yes, on our own it is a pretty bleak picture. But Jesus promised that He would not abandon us and leave us to try and understand all of this on our own. We do not have to struggle with our feeble minds at the ways and enormity of our God. Jesus said (John 14:26), *“But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have said to you.”* We are strengthened, empowered, and assisted by the power of God’s Holy Spirit in our journeys of faith. *“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him.”* Let’s stop our wondering.

A while back I was working a youth retreat. A couple of days into it I was asked to speak with a young lady who was struggling with some issues. After some time, we were able to get to the core of her struggles. Her father had taken his own life when she was very young and she had battled all these years, she was now a junior or senior in high school, wondering if it was her fault. She wanted to be a Christian and tried to go to church, etc. But she wondered...She wondered about God’s faithfulness. She wondered how God could be a God of love. She wondered if it was her fault, she wondered if God could forgive her.

Well, I have learned to not be surprised by the power of the Holy Spirit. I have not ceased to be amazed, but I have seen God work in mighty ways in people’s lives. Now everything wasn’t instantly made okay for this young lady, but she experienced the power of God’s love that weekend. She came to understand that she was not to blame for her father’s death. Through the power of God’s Word, she experienced a new birth of sorts that weekend. She left renewed and free! It was truly an amazing transformation and witness to God’s grace and faithfulness. He is faithful, we do not need to wonder!

“What then shall We say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us?”
Let’s go conquer the Land in His Name, Amen.

Communion

Continuing this Thursday, June 4, Pastor will offer communion at Mount Hope. Pastor will be meeting **by appointment** in the sanctuary with those who would like to participate. Appointments are offered beginning at 11:00am with the last appointment scheduled for 7:40pm. Appointments are 20 minutes apart allowing for **a visit of approximately 10 minutes**. The remaining 10 minutes allow Pastor to prepare for the next appointment.

Please call the office at 952 888 5059 between 9:00-3:00 and speak with Kim to set an appointment. Please leave a message if there is no answer. You can also email your request to church@mthopelutheran.org. At this time the plan is to offer communion every Thursday. If need be, a second day can be added. You are welcome to come as an individual or a family unit.

For your safety and for the safety of the Center families and the staff, we will be using the **East door** to enter and then heading right into the sanctuary. There will be hand sanitizer available at the entrance. We also ask that social distancing practices are followed and that masks are worn if at all possible. We do have masks on hand if needed. You will be able to drop off your offering and pick up a Portals of Prayer as well. You will not have access to the rest of the building at this time. **Thank you for respecting these guidelines**. Pastor will follow safety protocols when preparing the wine and wafer for communion.

If you fall into a Coronavirus **high-risk group**, please do not feel obligated to participate at this time. Make the best decision for yourself and your health. We care about you and look forward to a future when we are able to worship together again.

Announcements

Good News! Mount Hope has received a Payroll Protection Program forgivable loan. This loan was made available as a result of the pandemic. A huge thank you to Kirsten Buelow, our Church Treasurer, for the many hours she worked to secure this forgivable loan. These dollars will help us as we rebound from the reduced enrollment at the Center due to COVID19. There is still the need for our continued giving through offerings. Thank you for your generosity. The Center has begun caring for more children this week and is scheduled to continue adding children throughout the summer months. We thank God for blessing Mount Hope.

Sunday Worship Schedule

Services online during COVID19 shutdown

8:15am Traditional Worship Service

9:30am Connecting Hour

Bible Study / Sunday School

10:45am Praise Worship Service

Phone: 952-888-5059

E-mail: church@mthopelutheran.org

Website: www.mthopelutheran.org

Mount Hope's Staff

Fran Green Pastor

Christina Brantner Music Director

Jennifer Adamek Administrative Assistant

Kathy Sundseth Custodian

Kim Woebke Director of Preschool and Childcare
Administrative Assistant

Steve Sundseth Custodian

Sam Killam Custodian

Mount Hope Lutheran Church
3601 W Old Shakopee Rd
Bloomington, MN 55431

Address Service Requested

