

Spirit of Hope

Mount Hope Lutheran Church
Preschool and Childcare
November 11, 2020

Message from Pastor Fran Green

"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death, so that you do not grieve like the rest of mankind, who have no hope." 1 Thessalonians 4:13. NIV

Do you think our world is uninformed about death? Or, do you feel our world is ignorant or misinformed about what happens after death?

Yesterday, in our worship service, we continued our study of *1 Thessalonians* and looked at what the Scriptures tell us about death and life after death. I hope you will get a chance to view it online if you were not there and that message is included in this newsletter. Also, the entire worship service is available on our website, as well as previous worship services, mthopelutheran.org/sermons.

In our adult connecting hour (10:30), we continued our CLASS 401, *Discovering My Life Mission*. We looked at Jesus' example of servant leadership and talked about how we are to continue His mission in a dark and broken world. *Jesus said, "Go everywhere in the world, and tell the Good News to everyone." Mark 16:15 (NCV) "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere – in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." Acts 1:8 NLT*

I continue to present our challenge prayer during this study by encouraging all of us to be praying-**OFTEN**-for the Lord to bring people into our lives who need to hear the HOPE that we have in the Lord Jesus. May we all pray for opportunities to share our faith in Jesus!

We continue to offer private communion on **Wednesdays and Thursdays**. Please contact the church office to get your spot to receive Holy Communion, Wednesday 10:00 – 2:00 or Thursday after 1:00 November 11 and 12. If either day does not work, please let Kim know what does and I will work you in.

Planning ahead:

We will be offering an in-person Thanksgiving worship service on Wednesday, November 25 at 6:30 pm. And each Wednesday evening in December at 6:30 pm we will offer an in-person Advent worship service. We will also record and add these services to all of our other worship services on our webpage and YouTube channel.

NEW: We now have the ability to livestream all our services! We will be practicing, working out the bugs, and have a goal of going live for our Christmas services.

For you to ponder: Each week we close our worship service by reciting our Vision Statement, *Our vision is to reach our friends and neighbors with the truth, love, and hope of Jesus Christ while growing as His disciples.* Specifically, how do we accomplish this at Mount Hope? What would you say is the discipleship process or journey at Mount Hope?

Thank you for all of your prayers, please keep them coming. God is faithful! This continues to be a long road filled with much uncertainty, but it is also a time of wonderful opportunity.

We are Mount Hope, *Where Guests become Friends, Friends become Family!*

Pastor Fran Green

Sunday's Message

November 8, 2020

"Brothers and sisters, we do not want you to be uninformed about those who sleep in death..." 1 Thessalonians 4:13. Uninformed, ignorant? How informed do you believe our culture is about death; more specifically, about what happens after?

Have you heard the name Ray Kurzweil? Ray Kurzweil was the director of engineering at Google, I'm not sure if he still is or not; but he has some interesting thoughts on life after death. Kurzweil admits that he cared little for his health until age 35, when he was found to suffer from a glucose intolerance, an early form of type II diabetes (a major risk factor for heart disease). Kurzweil then found a doctor (Terry Grossman, M.D.) who shares his non-conventional beliefs to develop an extreme regimen involving hundreds of pills, chemical intravenous treatments, red wine and various other methods to attempt to live longer. Kurzweil was ingesting "250 supplements, eight to 10 glasses of alkaline water and 10 cups of green tea" every day and drinking several glasses of red wine a week to "reprogram" his biochemistry. Lately, he has cut down the number of supplement pills to 150. Kurzweil, now 72 y/o, states, "My primary strategy for living through the 21st century and beyond is not to die."

Kurzweil joined the Alcor Life Extension Foundation, a cryonics company. In the event of his declared death, Kurzweil will be perfused with cryoprotectants, vitrified in liquid nitrogen, and stored at an Alcor facility in the hope that future medical technology will be able to repair his tissues and revive him. In other words, frozen until the technology for eternal life is developed.

You too, can have your body frozen, if you'd like; did you know that? Of course, there's a cost. Here's what I found: Alcor Neuropreservation - \$80,000, annual costs \$705/Monthly costs \$61. Whole Body - \$220,000, annual costs \$525/Monthly \$46...There's much more, but just an idea. How many? As of August 31, 2019, Alcor had 1,731 members, including 172 who have died and whose corpses have been subject to cronic processes.

Do you think any of these people were/are misinformed? How many in our own country are misinformed? Our state? Our city? Neighborhood? Families?

"And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know what will happen to the believers who have died so you will not grieve like people who have no hope." 1 Thessalonians 4:13 NLT. The apostle Paul was confident of his resurrection when he died. He is giving us encouragement for the future, for our LIFE AFTER DEATH, ETERNAL LIFE. AMAZED.

John Eldredge, the author of the book, Wild at Heart bluntly states that heaven as often described in the church quite frankly sounds boring or like the never-ending church service in the sky. Not too exciting for many. "Floating around on the clouds playing the harp..." Is that what the Scriptures show us? That heaven is like a good "plan B", a backup plan, an eternal church service? Not quite as good as the here and now, but certainly better than the alternative? We hear it presented this way at times, don't we? You're a sinner! You better repent so that you can go to heaven when you die. This is most definitely true, and we should desire to live in heaven, but I believe it is so much more than an insurance plan.

What is a proper Biblical view of heaven?

First, heaven is not described as a place to go to, as in a geographic location, such as, putting the coordinates into a GPS and driving to Chicago. We are not told that. Heaven or paradise is defined as being with the Lord. The repentant thief on the cross is told by Jesus, "Today you will be with me in paradise." When Stephen is being stoned, he says, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit, as previously mentioned, Paul states, "It is my desire to be with Christ." Revelation 14:13 says "Whoever dies in the Lord is blessed from henceforth." It is undoubtedly a place because Jesus states in John 14:1-2 that he is going to prepare a place for His followers, but again we are not told anything about its location, except that it is in Jesus' presence. In our church, the Missouri-Synod Lutheran Church, we believe that immediately upon death, our souls depart and are united with the Lord in paradise.

We do not believe though, that this is it, the way we will spend eternity. The Scriptures tell us that there is more, and we believe that Jesus will return to the earth again. Jesus will restore what was cursed and make it new. On the day of the final judgment, the redeemed souls in heaven will be reunited with their own (now glorified) bodies and will begin to enjoy the bliss of heaven in both body and soul.

In John 5:28-29, Jesus says, "Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice and come out--those who have done good will rise to live, and those who have done evil will rise to be condemned."

In 1 Cor. 15, Paul goes into detail on how these bodies are as a seed and that they will rise into a new body that will dwell with the Lord on the new earth. There are also heavenly bodies, and there are earthly bodies, but the splendor of the heavenly bodies is one kind, and the splendor of the earthly bodies is another. The sun has one kind of splendor, the moon another and the stars another; and star differs from star in splendor. So will it be with the resurrection of the dead. The body that is sown is perishable; it is raised imperishable; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

The Lutheran church has always rejected as unscriptural the idea that the soul "sleeps" between death and Judgment Day in such a way that it is not conscious of heavenly bliss.

Isaiah 25:6-9, "On this mountain, the LORD Almighty will prepare a feast of rich food for all peoples, a banquet of aged wine-- the best of meats and the finest of wines. On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove the disgrace of his people from all the earth. The LORD has spoken. In that day they will say, 'Surely this is our God; we trusted in him, and he saved us. This is the LORD, we trusted in him; let us rejoice and be glad in his salvation.'"

Revelation 21:1-5, "Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'"

This is Eden restored. Remember in Genesis 3 after the fall of mankind; people were driven from the presence of the Lord. The most important thing for us to think about with heaven; is that it is living in the presence of the Lord. It is also important to see what God is doing here. People are not taken away to someplace out there or in the sky in safety as the earth will be destroyed like a massive atomic bomb.

No, the earth will be made new, restored, redeemed by our Lord, even as his people are renewed and restored with a new, glorious and real body living with Him. That is heaven. We can say that for sure based on the Holy Scriptures. This is NOT a backup plan, something to be dreaded or feared. This is THE fulfillment of who we were created to be. It could not get any better than this.

It is difficult to say much more about heaven, other than it is dwelling with the Lord in Eden restored. Imagine living as Adam and Eve before the Fall, walking and working in the presence of the Creator, Living God. In many ways, heaven is beyond our capacity to know and comprehend on this side of eternity. John offers a description of the New Jerusalem in Revelation 21:9-27, which almost seems as if he is saying it is so incredible and amazing that I cannot find enough words to describe it. The words match our theme in explaining the most essential thing of heaven and its indescribable radiance and glory are due to the presence of the Lord: Verse 21:11: "It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal." 21:22-23: "I did not see a temple in the city because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp."

The presence of the Lord! Indescribable! Incomprehensible! That is heaven. The Scriptures offer us more, but they do not give us everything. What they provide is enough, living in the presence of the Lord. 1 Corinthians 2:9, "However, as it is written: No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him."

It must be amazing! AMEN.

Announcements

Altar Flowers

Altar flowers are given to beautify our church. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday either sign up in the information hallway bulletin board or call Karen Mack 952-831-7428. November 15th altar flowers were given by Dan and Jennifer Adamek--in celebration of their son, Drew's 20th birthday.

HYMN Bible Study

Our next Hymn Bible Study for ladies will be on Tuesday, November 17th at 6:30 pm in the Youth Room at Mt. Hope. Please read and complete Month 3-Weeks 1-4, before the get together. We will complete Week 5 and the Monthly Reflection as a group.

Operation Christmas Child

Thank you to everyone for your generous donations to the Operation Christmas Child Shoebox event. 51 boxes were packed up and will be delivered soon to the distribution site. We pray that the children who receive these care packages will be blessed and enjoy them!

Action - Sharing Jesus' Love through November

Use the month of November to work with your local Veterans' Administration (VA) hospital to see what patients need in the way of clothing or other items.

Learn more about ministering to veterans at the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces page. You may also wish to provide audio Military BibleSticks to active service members.

Women of Hope – Women on a Mission

Jesus loves me, this I know. For the Bible tells me so! As a preschool director I hear this song as I walk in the hallways, and it brings joy to my heart. Preschoolers are not shy about singing loud and strong. They love to tell everyone, everywhere how much Jesus loves them. Do you have the joy of a little child as you communicate Jesus' love to the people you meet every day? Do you greet friends or family members with a smile, a greeting or a hug when you see them? We need to share those things with the people we meet, showing the love of God and reminding them that God's love is real and is a constant in their lives. "I have loved you with an everlasting love." Jeremiah 31:3.

Prayer: Jesus, help me to share Your love with the people around me today. Show me how to help others who are in need of that extra love. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Lisa Stirtz, President LWML Nebraska North District

Thank You

Many thanks for the prayers, cards and support received following my injury - Marjule Boehnke.

Thanksgiving Service



*Wednesday
November 25, 2020
6:30 pm*

ADVENT

a season of preparation

Wednesdays

Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23

at 6:30 pm



Sunday Worship Schedule

9:30am In-Person Worship

Services online at

www.mthopelutheran.org

Phone: 952-888-5059

E-mail: church@mthopelutheran.org

Website: www.mthopelutheran.org

Youtube Channel: Mt. Hope Lutheran
Church

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Address Service Requested

