

Spirit of Hope

Mount Hope Lutheran Church
Preschool and Childcare
November 18, 2020

Message from Pastor Fran Green

"So, encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing." 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NLT

Yesterday, in our worship service, we concluded our study of *1 Thessalonians* and looked at what the Scriptures tell us about finishing the race, the journey of faith. 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, we also concluded our CLASS 401, *Discovering My Life Mission*. A wonderful new ministry opportunity has grown out of this Bible study! We are going to begin a "pen pal"/letter writing outreach ministry. Please contact me for more information, pastor@mthopelutheran.org.

We will hold off for now, on additional in-person Bible study/connecting gatherings and re-evaluate after the first of the year. Please see below for more information on in-person gatherings at Mount Hope.

New information

We had planned for many in-person worship services in the coming weeks. However, as you are certainly aware, coronavirus cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are growing rapidly in Minnesota and many states throughout the nation. Most schools are returning to online only learning, sports seasons have been cancelled, many nursing facilities are having to again go into "lock-down" and the list goes on and on...Therefore, leadership has made some difficult decisions that will impact the next several weeks. Please know that these decisions were not made lightly, we are truly trusting the Lord to lead us through the trials of this pandemic.

Thanksgiving Eve service and the Advent services scheduled for **Wednesdays at 6:30 on November 25, December 2, 9, 16, and 23 will be offered online or DVD only**. The **Christmas Eve service scheduled for either 4 or 6 pm will be offered online or DVD only**. Our **Christmas Day celebration service will be held on Sunday, December 27 at 9:30 in-person, online, or DVD**. At this time, we will **continue to offer an in-person worship service on Sundays**

at 9:30. Again, these were difficult decisions made through prayer and trust in our Savior. Christina and Jennifer are working hard to put together wonderful and meaningful services that we know the Lord will bless.

Also, **we now have the ability to livestream** all our services! We are currently practicing, working out the bugs, and have a goal of going live soon.

We continue to offer private communion on Thursdays. Please contact the church office to get your spot to receive **Holy Communion, Thursday, November 19 and Wednesday, November 25**. If Thursday does not work, please let Kim know what does and I will work you in.

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 15, 2020

FINISH IT!! Football analogy-fourth quarter. I was thinking back to January 14, 2018 this week. This is a pretty significant day for many Minnesotans, probably for many here today? Do any of you remember that day? *The Minneapolis Miracle!?* I remember that day very well because I gave a message that day called, *Finish it!* 10 seconds left in the game the New Orleans Saints are leading 24-23; the Vikings have the ball on their own 38-yard line. Case Keenum passes the ball the Stephan Diggs a Saints player, Marcus Williams misses a tackle and Diggs goes on to score the winning touchdown with time expired on the clock. It was an amazing FINISH! I had people texting and calling me, remembering the message from that morning, stating, the Vikings finished it! They must have heard the message.

The Apostle Paul is telling the readers, he is telling us today, to FINISH IT! *"So, encourage each other and build each other up, just as you are already doing."* 1 Thessalonians 5:11 NLT

In other words, don't give up. New Testament scholar NT Wright, *He began the letter with the trio of faith, hope, and love, and that is how he draws it now towards its conclusion. Faith and hope are the breastplate, to ward off frontal attacks. The hope of salvation is the helmet, protecting the head itself. Underneath it all, as always in Paul we find God's action in Jesus the Messiah.*

In verse 10 we hear again the basic Christian creed: *"He died for us and rose again. THAT is the main defense against all that the dark world can throw at the children of light."*

Jesus strengthens both the heart and the mind with faith, hope, and love. We, like the Thessalonians, need to remind one another of this as we face a world that is in disarray. FINISH IT!

Here we are again hearing bad news about limiting our in-person gatherings. Coronavirus again gathering momentum, numbers growing, etc. 2020!! It may feel as though we are in a losing game with time about to expire. Paul says, FINISH IT!! Jesus died for you!! Be My witnesses, this is a tremendous opportunity to tell others of what I have done. Yes, it's frustrating, but Jesus has secured your victory. *1 Corinthians 15:57, "But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

We can FINISH IT, because it is over, the victory has already been won. Jesus said, "It is finished!" That's why Paul can continue in verse 58, *"Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain."*

Following our reading for today from *1 Thessalonians chapter 5*, Paul continues with some final instructions on how to live, how to FINISH IT. These words are built off of the firm foundation of faith, hope, and love. *1 Thessalonians 5:12-22. Verse 12-13 "Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other."*

What work? Studying, learning from God's Word. We need Biblical teaching and leadership. It helps us to "fight the good fight", to grow in love of God, and to grow in loving each other, to live in peace with each other. We encourage and build each other up through our study of the Word of God. Verses 14-15, *"And we urge you, brothers and sisters, warn those who are idle and disruptive, encourage the disheartened, help the weak, be patient with everyone. Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always strive to do what is good for each other and for everyone else."*

Each Christian has the responsibility to look out for the needs of others, to give comfort, warning, strengthening and example whenever necessary. We must actively go after what will be good for others. We encourage and build each other up through loving and serving our neighbor. Verses 16-18, *"Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."* This sounds familiar doesn't it? Paul uses these same words in other letters. Interestingly, there are approximately 70 New Testament commands to rejoice. Is it even possible to rejoice today? YES!! Verse 10, *"He died for us so that, whether we are awake or*

asleep, we may live together with Him.” You are the people of God, you are part of His family, baptized and filled with the Holy Spirit-Rejoice! We encourage and build each other up by rejoicing always in the Lord.

Pray continually! *One scholar wrote: If we live in this way, conscious continually of our dependence on God, conscious of His presence with us always, conscious of His will to bless, then our general spirit of prayerfulness will in the most natural way overflow into uttered prayer. It is instructive to read again and again in Paul’s letters the many prayers that he interjects. Prayer was as natural to Paul as breathing. At any time, he was likely to break off his argument or to sum it up by some prayer of greater or less length. In the same way our lives can be lived in such an attitude of dependence on God that we will easily and naturally move into the words of prayer on all sorts of occasions, great and small, grave and gay. Prayer is to be constant.* We encourage and build each other up by praying continually.

Give thanks in all circumstances! We need to give thanks about everything knowing that God is working all things together for good for His people who love Him. Paul said all of these commands are definitely God’s will for every believer. We encourage and build each other up by giving thanks in all circumstances.

There is much to lament in our world today. We could even hear a message like this and think, it is just too much; it is another “to-do” list that I simply cannot do. Remember, Jesus said, *It is finished!* The Victory is secure! We encourage and build each other up not to earn or secure a victory. We build each other up because it is who we are. We encourage each other because God empowers us to live this way because we are here for each other. **WE NEED EACH OTHER. FINISH IT! This is our battle cry living on this side of eternity.**

Towards the end of chapter five, Paul gives us a blessing, *“May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and He will do it.”* 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

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 22nd altar flowers were given by Armand and Marjule Boehnke--in thankfulness for 57 years of marriage and for God's many blessings.

Thank You

Thanks for all the prayers and cards during my brother Larry's illness and death. He had a very strong faith-Bob and Carol.

Thank you all for the many cards and greetings for my 90th birthday on November 4. They were very appreciated. God's blessings to you all-Helmuth Schmidt

Action - Sharing Jesus' Love through December

Mt Hope is collecting monetary donations now through the end of the year by offerings and online donations for KARA (Kids At Risk Action Group). **ABOUT [VIDEO](#)**.

Who are they? A local non-profit organization that supports the people, policies, and programs making life better for abused and neglected children.

What does KARA do? KARA engages principals, teachers, social workers, lawyers, judges, police officers, parents, students, health professionals, and the larger community in stopping and healing child abuse and trauma. "We are passionate and unapologetic advocates for the welfare of abused and neglected kids in Minnesota, the United States, and around the world." - KARA

This is an opportunity to support change in the lives of these children living right here in our very own neighborhoods. If God calls upon you to support the efforts of this organization who advocates to make changes in policies, work with community members to increase awareness of all of us who are the protectors of these children, then please consider giving specifically to this cause.

The final dollar amount collected will be then sent directly to the organization in Hopkins, MN to support their efforts. Monetary donations are to support these traumatized and vulnerable children and fund the efforts of advocates to make a change at the government level. Please visit <https://www.invisiblechildren.org/> and learn how you can get involved in volunteering, signing petitions, sending letters to politicians and policymakers. -

Send your donation to: (write "KARA donation" in the memo)

Mt Hope Lutheran Church
Attn: Finance
3601 W Old Shakopee Rd
Bloomington, MN 55431

Donate online (in the apply to options, select "KARA - December outreach"
mthopelutheran.org/giving/

Thanksgiving Service



*Online only/No In-person
Worship*

*Wednesday, November 25,
at 6:30 pm*

ADVENT

a season of preparation

Wednesdays

Dec. 2, 9, 16, 23

at 6:30 pm

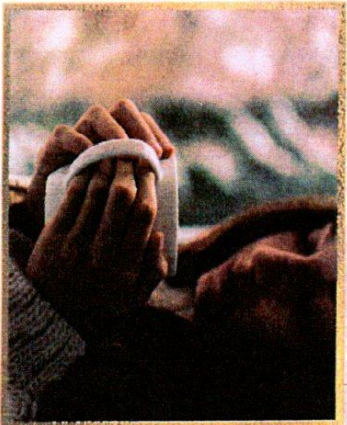


Online Services Only

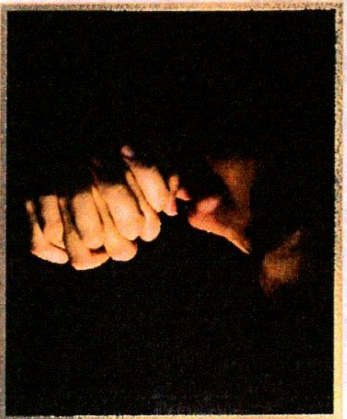
*Mount Hope Lutheran Church Youtube Channel or
www.mthopelutheran.org/sermons*

PREPARE YE

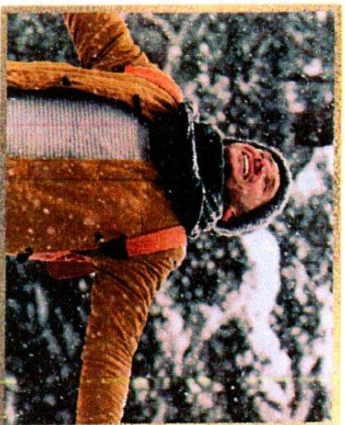
A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR *Advent*



WEEK 1: *Ponder*



WEEK 2: *Pray*



WEEK 3: *Praise*



WEEK 4: *Proclaim*

PREPARE YE

A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR *Advent*

BY REV. REED LESSING

Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Isaiah 40:3

In this worship series for Advent, we contemplate the many ways we prepare ourselves for the coming of the Christ Child on Christmas, taking cues from the psalms of old and from those whom God chose to play a part in the story of our Lord's birth. As we draw near to the manger bed of our Savior from sin and death, our hearts prepare him room for his everlasting love.

WEEK 1: PONDER: We consider ways in which we can ponder the meaning of the birth of our Savior through the reading of Scripture and through reflection. Mary serves as a model for us in this pondering in the Annunciation. Theme verse: "We ponder your steadfast love, O God, in the midst of your temple." Psalm 48:9

WEEK 1: PRAY: We think about ways in which we can take more time during this season to communicate to our God through prayer as we wait for Christ. Zechariah, who went to the temple to pray, serves as an example for us of how hard that waiting in prayer can be. Theme verse: "But as for me, my prayer is to you, O Lord. At an acceptable time, O God, in the abundance of your steadfast love, answer me." Psalm 69:13

WEEK 1: PRAISE: We celebrate the upcoming arrival of our Savior through songs and shouts of praise as we prepare for him. Elizabeth, in her greeting of Mary, provides a benchmark for rejoicing with others over the good news of salvation in Jesus, even as we wait. Theme verse: "Sing praises to the Lord, O you his faithful ones, and give thanks to his holy name." Psalm 30:4

WEEK 1: PROCLAIM: We contemplate how we can prepare ourselves and others for the arrival of Jesus through our proclaiming. John the Baptist stands as the forerunner of all future proclaimers of Christ and gives us the courage to use our own voices to proclaim our devotion to the One who is born to save. Theme verse: "The might of your awesome deeds shall be proclaimed, and I will declare your greatness." Psalm 145:6

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

