

Spirit of Hope

Mount Hope Lutheran Church

Preschool and Childcare

December 2, 2020

Message from Pastor Fran Green

“Keep Watch! I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for Him!!” Mark 13:37 NLT

We talked about the importance of disciplined watch on Sunday in our worship service. Yes, we anticipate, watch, and wait to celebrate the birth of Jesus once again; but Advent and our entire life journey of faith, should also be lived in excited anticipation of Jesus coming again.

The Scriptures promise Jesus’ return and it is something His followers should be eagerly and excitedly watching for! Do we live with as much excitement and anticipation for Jesus’ return as we do waiting for the celebration of Christmas? I hope you will get a chance to view the service online if you were not there and that message is included in this newsletter. The entire worship service is available on our website, as well as previous worship services, mthopelutheran.org/sermons.

Upcoming worship services that will be available on our website and YouTube page after we record them each week: Advent services for December 2, 9, 16, and 23; these will be also be available on DVD. The Christmas Eve service will be offered online or DVD only and we are working out the kinks to be able to livestream this service.

Our Christmas Day celebration service will be held on Sunday, December 27 at 9:30 in-person, online, or DVD. We will continue to offer an in-person worship service on Sundays at 9:30.

Christina Brantner and Jennifer Adamek are working hard to put together wonderful and meaningful services that we know the Lord will bless even though so many of our traditions are being interrupted this year. Christina and Jennifer also decorated the sanctuary and it looks awesome! Thank you, ladies, for working so hard to keep the season special.

We continue to offer private communion on Wednesdays. Please contact the church office to get your spot to receive Holy Communion, Wednesday, December 2 and next Wednesday December 9. If Wednesday 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? Are/how are you engaging in our vision? Our vision team will be seeking responses to these questions.

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

Sundays Message

November 29, 2020

Keep Watch! I say to you what I say to everyone: Watch for Him!! Mark 13:37. Yes, watch for Him.

Have you ever had to stand watch? I remember when I was in basic training in the Air Force, we had to take turns guarding the door to our dorm the times we were in there. Of course, this sounds like no big deal, I mean we're not in war zone or anything; it's just dorms on an Air Force base in Texas.

We didn't spend much time in our dorms, the main time was of course, at night for a few hours of sleep. We learned the discipline and importance of the night watch and we also heard of little tricks that our drill instructor would play to try to gain access outside of the proper protocol. Apparently, he may knock on the door and do various things to deliberately gain access without presenting the proper credentials or any other number of security breaches. The penalty for making a mistake was no doubt some sort of physical training exercises or loss of privileges...For the entire flight, not just the person who erred.

The most difficult shifts were during the overnight hours when everyone, except you, is sleeping. Tensions were high while waiting, watching, looking for the training instructor to come knocking. Keep Watch!! It was very easy to stay awake and watch during those times hoping nobody would come and knock on the door. But, as we became more comfortable and more tired from the daily grind, Keeping Watch got harder and harder. We know that Jesus is coming—physically, visibly, finally, certainly—and we need to be alert, and so ready...always. We renew our focus on this truth during this time of year when we remember and celebrate Jesus' first coming.

This is a time for us to live with renewed certainty in the reality of the promised return of Jesus and redouble our commitment to alert living.

Of course, waiting is hard. We become lousy waiters, we lose our alert edge and even slide into sleep. Complacent, lackadaisical Christians are the very antithesis of the alert disciples called for by Christ. It leads us to this question:

“What are you waiting for?”—our question to God. Some have pondered this question since Jesus’ ascension. Many have attempted to predict and some have claimed some sort of “insider” knowledge to know the time of Jesus’ return. But, that’s not our job. Our job is to KEEP WATCH! The day and hour are already scheduled. Jesus said, “However, no one knows the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows.” Mark 13:32 NLT. “For He has set a day when He will judge the world with justice.” Acts 17:31. God has established the last hour. It will certainly come. The Scriptures tell us, When the Son of Man comes...No one, except the Father, knows the calendar’s last day.

We grow impatient-“What’s God waiting for?” The Lord isn’t really being slow about his promise, as some people think. No, he is being patient for your sake. “He does not want anyone to be destroyed, but wants everyone to repent.” 2 Peter 3:9 NLT We doubt, “Maybe it isn’t really going to happen after all.” We grow complacent. We are easily distracted from an alert state. We drift into sleep. Our questioning ends in shame and then terror as God turns the question back on us. “What are you waiting for?”—God’s question to us. Learning to be alert, or “What part of ‘Be alert!’ don’t you understand?” Being alert describes the life of a pilgrim; we are on a sacred journey. How often do we think of our lives in this way? Mark 13:35, “You, too, must keep watch! For you don’t know when the master of the household will return.” We have a destination. We have talked about heaven or living in the presence of God. Jesus is returning for us. He will come for some of us before the end; but make no mistake we are journeying to life with Him in His presence.

We have direction for each day. The Lord wants all people to be saved. We get to live for Him. Earlier in Mark 13, Jesus said, “But this will be your opportunity to tell them about me. For the Good News must first be preached to all nations.” Mark 13:9b-10.

Sleep is the ultimate failure. How? Remember, even the disciples fell asleep after Jesus told them to Keep Watch. This is manifest in complacent, careless attitudes. There are so many distractions in our world. We fill or waste our time with meaningless activities. Our world lulls us to sleep when we should be about the Lord’s business. Knowing for whom we are waiting, or “Who’s the real watcher?” There is only one who never sleeps, Psalm 121:3-5, “He will not let you stumble; the one who watches over you will not slumber. Indeed, He who watches over Israel never slumbers or sleeps. The Lord himself watches over you! The Lord stands beside you as your protective shade.” Only God never sleeps. He watches you, always. He directs your way, always. “Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.” Proverbs 3:5-6. “We can make our plans, but the Lord determines our steps.” Proverbs 16:9.

Only God can accomplish The Day. We stumble and fall, but our Lord is faithful even though we are not. The Small Catechism reminds us, *As Christians, we can say, “I am baptized – I am washed – I am God’s own child and an heir of heaven. My confidence in these great gifts is based entirely on God’s Word and promises.”*

I have so many faults and problems that I might lose hope. But "God does not lie" and "God's Word cannot err". He has washed me clean. I can trust Him. He will help me in every trouble.

And from our first reading today 1 Corinthians 1:8-9, "He will keep you strong to the end so that you will be free from all blame on the day when our Lord Jesus Christ returns." God will do this, for he is faithful to do what he says, and he has invited you into partnership with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. KEEP WATCH!

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 29th altar flowers were given by Gordy and Ramona Moss--in thankfulness for God's many blessings and by the Herman family - in memory of Will, who would have been 98 on Dec. 8th.

Thank You

Thank you very much for all the prayers, cards and support given at the passing of my mother-Pastor Dan Ritter.

Stain Glass Window Project

Design, patterns and layout has been completed. Work has started on making the windows. The altar windows will be first, then the side windows. We have received two thirds of the money needed. If you are able to donate, mark the donation Windows. Questions contact committee members. Butch Caspersen, Committee Chair, Ted Simmons, Linda Carstens, and Bob Tolzin.

Book Club

Due to the rise in cases of Covid we will not be meeting for Book Club in December or January. Keep reading good books! Can you find good friends, interesting plots, and lots of conversation inside the world of a book.

Action - Sharing Jesus' Love through December



Mitten Tree

We will be collecting outdoor gear for the children of Trinity First Lutheran School in Minneapolis. Hats, mittens, gloves, scarves, and gators can be placed on the Mitten Tree in the entryway hallway. Thank you for your donations!

**INVISIBLE
CHILDREN**

*Kids At Risk Action
(KARA Group)*

KARA Project

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/

ADVENT

a season of preparation

Wednesdays
Dec 2, 9, 16, and 23
at 6:30 pm

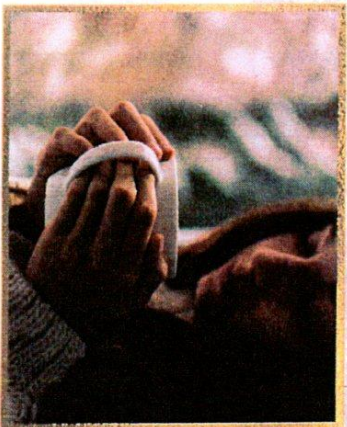


Online Services Only

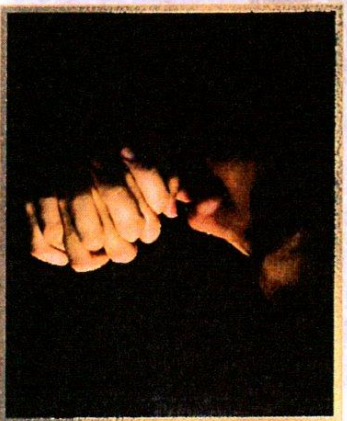
*Mount Hope Lutheran Church Youtube Channel or
www.mthopelutheran.org/sermons*

PREPARE YE

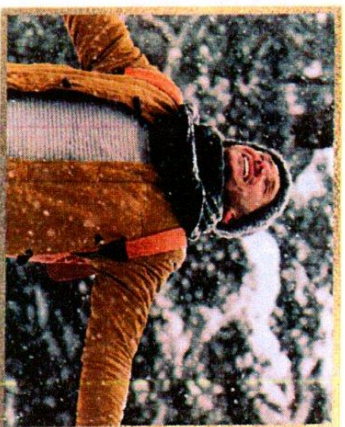
A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR *Advent*



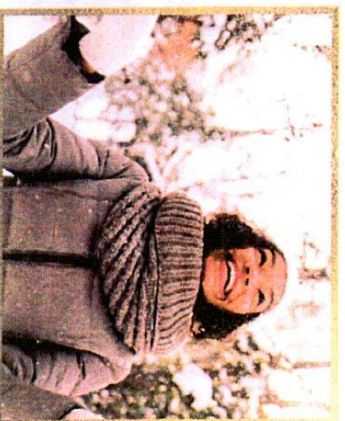
WEEK 1: *Ponder*



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 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

Mount Hope's Staff

Fran Green	Pastor
	pastor@mthopelutheran.org
Christina Brantner	Music Director
	music@mthopelutheran.org
Jennifer Adamek	Administrative Assistant-Media
	jadamek@mthopelutheran.org
Kim Wuebke	Director of Preschool and Childcare
	Administrative Assistant
	church@mthopelutheran.org
Steve Sundseth	Custodian
Sam Killam	Custodian

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

Address Service Requested

