

# Spirit of Hope

Mount Hope Lutheran Church

Preschool and Childcare

December 9, 2020

## Message from Pastor Fran Green

“The kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!” Mark 1:15 NIV

Last week in our worship service, we talked about Keeping Watch as we wait to celebrate Jesus’ birth once again. We wait to celebrate that wonderful Silent Night, Holy Night; but we also wait with eager expectation Jesus’ Second Coming. We are to be the ones who, like John the Baptist, who are calling the world into this amazing story. We, just like Israel in John’s day, are the cast. We are all a part of this drama! But the world sleeps.

The Scriptures DO 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 in waiting for the celebration of Christmas? As part of the cast of this amazing drama, we are to be proclaiming this wonderful Good News to our sleeping world. I hope you will get a chance to view the service online if you were not there. By the way, we did LIVE STREAM the service yesterday! The entire EDITED worship service is available on our website, as well as previous worship services, [mthopelutheran.org/sermons](http://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 DVDs are available on a table near the east entrance or call the church office and we will send you a copy in the mail. 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. Please watch for more information coming very soon on the time of our “live” Christmas Eve service.

Our Christmas Day celebration service will be held on Sunday, December 27 at 9:30 in-person, live streamed, on our website/YouTube page, or DVD. We will continue to offer an in-person worship service on Sundays at 9:30.

We continue to offer private communion on Wednesdays. Please contact the church office to get your spot to receive Holy Communion, Wednesday, December 9 and next Wednesday December 9. If Wednesday does not work, please let Kim know what does and I will work you in.

Thank you!! I want to say thank you to everyone who sent me cards, gift cards, greetings, etc. for pastor appreciation and also for my birthday. I am humbled and truly grateful to be serving in such a loving and caring faith family.

Continue to ponder please: 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

December 6, 2020

This is where the good news starts – the good news of Jesus the Messiah, God’s son.

Yes, It began just as the prophet Isaiah had written: “Look, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, and he will prepare your way. He is a voice shouting in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord’s coming! Clear the road for him!’” Mark 1:1-3 NLT

What? No baby Jesus? Where’s the wonderful, Silent Night, Holy Night? All is calm.

No, just Bang! Action! Mark is telling us that that’s what John the Baptist was like to the Jewish people of his day. The ministry of John the Baptist burst in upon the world. Many had been looking for a sign from God, but they hadn’t expected it to look like this. Many had wanted a Messiah to lead them against the Romans, but they were NOT expecting a prophet telling them to repent.

What a wake-up call! Every year at the time of Passover, the people of God recited, they remembered the Exodus from Egypt. Remembering how God had rescued them from bondage, bringing them through the Red Sea across the wilderness to their promised land. Along with the Creation account it’s the most important story in the Old Testament. But, this John the Baptist character, what is going on?

New Testament Scholar NT Wright, “But instead of simply hearing the words and remembering the story, John was turning it into a drama, a play, and telling his hearers that they were the cast. They were to come through the water and be free. They were to leave behind ‘Egypt’ - the world of sin in which they were living, the world of rebelling against the living God. They, the Israel of the day, were looking in the wrong direction and going in the

wrong direction. It was time to turn round and go the right way (that's what repentance means). It was time to stop dreaming and wake up to God's reality. This is your story." Yes, the Messiah was coming, John was getting people ready. Dr. Paul Rees, "The Gospel is neither a discussion nor a debate; it is an announcement!"

Last week we talked about Keeping Watch as we wait. We wait to celebrate that wonderful Silent Night, Holy Night; but we wait with eager expectation Jesus Second Coming. We are to be the ones who, like John the Baptist, who are calling the world into this amazing story. We, just like Israel in John's day, are the cast. We are all a part of this drama! But the world sleeps.

It reminds me of a modern-day parable that I happened to reread this week. It is a little book titled, *The Dream Giver*, written by Bruce Wilkinson. The sub-title states the purpose of the book, *Following Your God-Given Destiny*. But the first couple of paragraphs of the parable so wonderfully describe our sleeping world today: Not long ago and not far away, a Nobody named Ordinary lived in the Land of Familiar. Every day was pretty much the same for Ordinary. In the mornings he got up and went to his Usual Job. After work, he ate almost the same dinner he'd eaten the evening before. Then he sat in his recliner and watched the box that mesmerized most Nobodies on most nights. Sometimes, Best Friend came over to join Ordinary in front of the Box. Sometimes, Ordinary went to his Parents' and they watched together. For the most part, not much happened in Familiar that hadn't happened before. Ordinary thought he was content. He found the routines reliable. He blended in with the crowd. And mostly, he wanted only what he had.

John is bursting, once again, on the scene today; "Prepare the way of the Lord!" "Repent, and believe the Good News!"

The Good News is that Jesus takes all of us Nobodies named Ordinary living in the Land of Familiar and changes us into the most precious Somebodies in the world. We are part of the family of God by grace through faith. There are no Nobodies or Ordinaries in God's family. The Son of God is far too valuable to die for a nobody.

Turning to our first reading for today, 2 Peter 3:9, "The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead, he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance. There are no ordinaries or nobodies, the Lord wants all people to be saved." This is our story too. The Lord is waiting for us. Perhaps more than any other time in our lives, the world is crying out and open to the Truth. The wilderness is dangerous, filled with temptations, distractions, and lies. Jesus says, Follow me! I will lead you through. It is time for us too, to stop dreaming and wake up to God's reality. In the apostle Peter's first letter he offers instructions while we wait and watch. 1 Peter 4:7-11; "The end of all things is near. (Keep watch!) Therefore, be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen."

This does not sound like Nobodies in the land of Familiar doing Usual Jobs. This is the people of God empowered by Him to love and serve the precious somebodies who are saved by His wonderful grace. We proclaim this truth

boldly to our friends and neighbors. The Lord wants all people to be saved. This is not, this cannot be a humdrum routine existence. It is living in purposeful and meaningful service to our Lord and Savior. Mark is calling us today to ACTION! He is telling us to Prepare the Way of the Lord, Jesus is coming again. 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.

The Altar flowers given on Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> were given by Harriet and Jerry Buelow in celebration of their triplet great-grandchildren's 5th birthday.

Sunday, December 20<sup>th</sup> altar flowers are given by Dave and Fran Wallin--in celebration of God's many blessings and Dave's 73rd birthday

### 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.

### New Address

Rose Kitt, 10000 Newton Ave S Apt 376, Bloomington, MN 55431

### 2021 Offering Envelopes

2021 Offering envelopes are available for pick-up in the narthex between 7:00-5:00 weekdays and on Sunday mornings. Please do not use the 2021 envelopes until the new year.

### Free Meals Available

Bloomington Public Schools, with the assistance of a grant, have free meals available for all Bloomington residents until Dec 30. Please call the church office if you need assistance in accessing this service.

### Be Warned of Scammers

Please do not answer or open any texts or emails that look like they are from Pastor Fran, asking for you to call him as soon as possible regarding purchasing Gift Cards, etc. His account has been hacked and is being used wrongfully-just delete them. Never send money, gifts cards, or cashiers checks to anyone asking by texts, emails or on the phone. If it sounds fishy, it usually is!

# 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/](http://mthopelutheran.org/giving/)

# Women of Hope

One of our favorite servant events to do at Christmastime is to do is to gather donations gift baskets for our homebound members and send care packages to our military and college students. This year, Dianne Ritter was able to procure a \$250 Thrivent Action Grant for supplies and shipping costs. Pastor Fran will be bringing nine gifts stockings to our homebound shut-ins. The stockings include a pair of socks, hand sanitizer, Chapstick, lotion, toothbrush, toothpaste, snacks, pen & pencil and chocolate.

Some extra info for you all that I will be sending to Thrivent: I mailed out today, One military care package was sent to Jonathan Moss and 5 college care packages were sent to Colin Alt, Zeke Green, Emily Woodhall, Sabrina Ford and Drew Adamek. College student, Sam Killam, will be receiving a gift card from McDonald's since he lives at home. We are also sending a Target gift card to Nader & Georgette from the International Friendship Center, in appreciation of their work with PABLO.

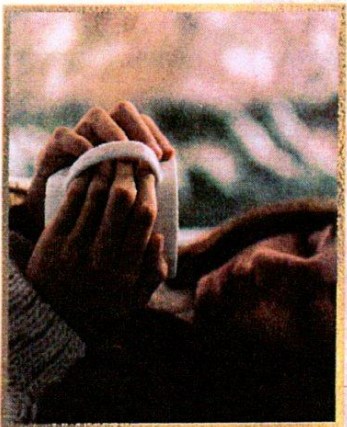
Thank you, Thrivent for your generosity which was such a blessing in this year of COVID-19! Hopefully, next year we can get back to our usual congregational participation!

Please remember these members, military and students of our congregation this Christmastime.

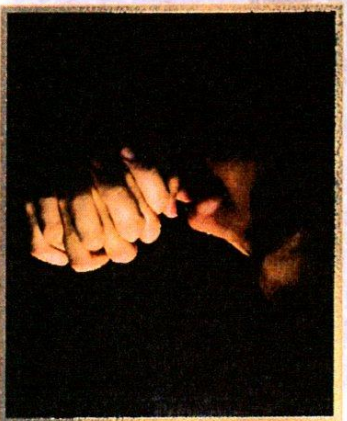


# PREPARE YE

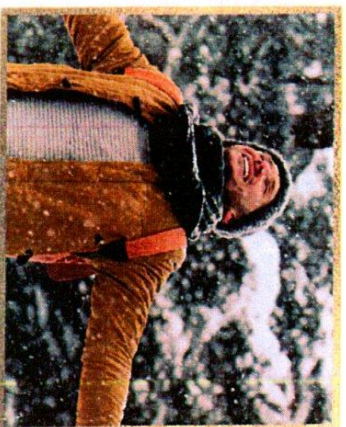
## A SERIES OF SPECIAL SERVICES FOR *Advent*



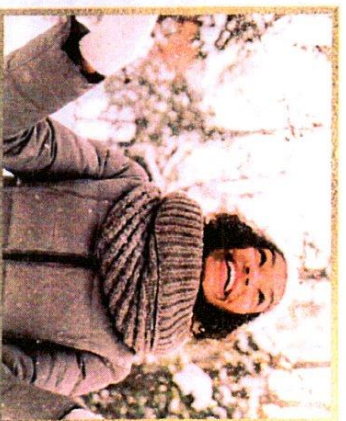
WEEK 1: *Ponder*



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](http://www.mthopelutheran.org)

**Phone:** 952-888-5059

**E-mail:** [church@mthopelutheran.org](mailto:church@mthopelutheran.org)

**Website:** [www.mthopelutheran.org](http://www.mthopelutheran.org)

**Youtube Channel:** Mt. Hope Lutheran Church

### **Mount Hope's Staff**

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| Fran Green         | Pastor   |
|                    | <a href="mailto:pastor@mthopelutheran.org">pastor@mthopelutheran.org</a>   |
| Christina Brantner | Music Director   |
|                    | <a href="mailto:music@mthopelutheran.org">music@mthopelutheran.org</a>     |
| Jennifer Adamek    | Administrative Assistant-Media   |
|                    | <a href="mailto:jadamek@mthopelutheran.org">jadamek@mthopelutheran.org</a> |
| Kim Wuebke         | Director of Preschool and Childcare  |
|                    | Administrative Assistant   |
|                    | <a href="mailto:church@mthopelutheran.org">church@mthopelutheran.org</a>   |
| Steve Sundseth     | Custodian  |
| Sam Killam         | Custodian  |

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Address Service Requested

