

Spirit of Hope

Mount Hope Lutheran Church

Preschool and Childcare

February 10, 2021

A Note from Pastor Fran Green

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them. Romans 8:28 NLT

We talked about RISK on Sunday in worship as we continue our series *Forward*, based on the book *Forward, Discovering God's Presence and Purpose in Your Tomorrow* by Dr. David Jeremiah. Interestingly, many books and sermons have been written focusing on the apostle Peter and the great risk that he took stepping out of the boat. Of course, it was a risk, but as we talked on Sunday, it seems that focusing on Peter misses the whole point. The story of "walking on the water" is not really about Peter; Jesus is the main character; and the story, as in all of the Scriptures, is about Him. *You really are the Son of God! They exclaimed. Matthew 14:33*

The reality is that Jesus took the greatest risk ever taken giving completely of Himself on the cross. It was the greatest risk! It was the risk of love. We are called to love as He loves. We too are called to risk it all in love of our Lord. This "risk" is not really a risk; it is sure and certain hope in The One who risked it all for you and for me. And it is for this reason that we can risk boldly. *We love because He first loved us...1 John 4:19.*

The challenge for all of us is to move forward, to RISK and grow as God's people with our focus on Jesus and our relationship with Him. **How can we be part of the solution?** What might the Lord be calling us to do/RISK as we live as His witnesses? How can we share Jesus and love our friends and neighbors? The entire message is included in this newsletter and can also be found on our website or YouTube page.

Invite a guest to join us in person at 9:30 each Sunday or via live streaming on our YouTube page [Mount Hope Lutheran Church - YouTube](#) or catch it at a later time either on our website mthopelutheran.org or call for a DVD copy. Remember, there are a lot of lonely people out there and perhaps that lonely person is you. Your Mount Hope family is here for you, please reach out and connect with us.

The congregational voter's meeting **scheduled for January 24 will be held this coming Sunday, February 14** immediately following worship. We will be conducting a short business meeting for Mount Hope and then voting on the question from LCMS president Matthew Harrison. The question is simply yes/no on adding one year to the current triennium to allow district conventions to be held (many already have or will be postponed due to COVID-19 restrictions), which is necessary prior to the LCMS National Convention. As mentioned previously,

this is not a divisive issue for our synod, but simply a matter for us to be able to conduct the business of our church body.

We will continue to offer private communion by appointment for now for those who are able to come in to church during the week. Please contact the church office to get your spot to receive **Holy Communion, Wednesday, February 10.**

On Sunday, February 21, there will be opportunities to receive the Lord's Supper immediately following the worship service for those who are unable to come during the week.

On a personal note, I am schedule for a total knee replacement on March 1. At this point, I will have pre-op appointments the week prior and on Friday, February 26, I will have a COVID test. So, that means I will need to quarantine from that point on. Pastors Dan Ritter and John Stern will be covering for me while away. The surgeon has not been very specific in the amount of recovery time necessary, so we will proceed with our tentative plans. Thank you, Pastor Dan and Pastor John, for helping us out during this time.

Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:57

We are Mount Hope, *Where Guests become Friends, Friends become Family!*
Serving together,
Pastor Fran Green



The Season of Lent

Lent begins next week! Our Lenten season will kick off next week with our Ash Wednesday service. This year we will be visiting *Places of the Passion.*

The places where the passion of our Lord took place hold special meaning to Christians the world over. These places remind us that Jesus walked this earth and stood in locations we can still find today to carry out his mission of salvation. This was no sightseeing trip for our Savior. There was a serious reason he came to be at certain places and at particular times to suffer and die and rise again. He was fulfilling the will of his Father who desired that we be forgiven and given a place in heaven with him forever.

Each week, these worship services will be available online at mthopelutheran.org/sermons and on our YouTube page. They will also be available on DVD at church or we can send them to you in the mail, simply let us know. We are continuing with this format of online services during the week and in-person worship on Sundays as this has worked very well in limiting contact with or spreading COVID-19. For Easter Sunday, we will be asking people to sign up for one of two services so that we are able to gauge our worship numbers. Thank you for your continued patience and understanding as we navigate, what is hopefully, the final phase of the coronavirus limitations.

Sunday's Message

Do you think Peter thought it risky to step out of the boat? What about Caleb taking the “Promised Land”? **What is the riskiest thing you have ever done?**

It seems that we think of Risk as a negative rather than a good thing. “Well, that’s kind of risky.” Defined: Something that may cause injury or harm. Antonyms in the dictionary of RISK, preservation, defense, protection, invulnerability, safeguard. These all sound reasonable wouldn’t you say?

There is a positive side of risk that is celebrated though in our culture. Extreme sports are fun to watch, and it can be fashionable to be a “risk-taker” in our world.

We are being challenged to RISK today as we continue our study *Forward*, based on the book by Dr. David Jeremiah. Let’s look a little closer at our gospel reading for today,

At the very dead of night he came towards them, walking on the water. The disciples saw him walking on the sea and panicked, thinking it was a ghost. They screamed with terror. But Jesus at once spoke to them.

‘Cheer up,’ he said, ‘it’s me! Don’t be frightened!’

‘If it’s really you, Master,’ said Peter in reply, ‘give me the word to come to you on the water.’

‘Come along, then,’ said Jesus.

Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came towards Jesus. But when he saw the strong wind he was afraid, and began to sink.

‘Master,’ he yelled, ‘rescue me!’

Jesus at once reached out his hand and caught him.

‘A fine lot of faith you’ve got!’ he said. ‘Why did you doubt?’

They got into the boat, and the wind died down. The people in the boat worshiped him.

‘You really are God’s son!’ they said. Matthew 14:22-33 (NT Wright translation)

What a risk for Peter! And that is typically where we land in thinking about this story and risk FOR Jesus. Many books have been written and sermons preached (I’ve preached a few myself) on the importance for US to risk for Jesus. Remember, *If you want to walk on water, you’ve got to get out of the boat*, by Jon Ortberg?

Now, don't get me wrong; I believe we are called to RISK and give our lives for Jesus. But, the danger in this and even the danger of our chapter in the book *Forward*, is that it becomes all about ME. It is my purpose in life that matters, my fame and my greatness. Jesus wants to help me succeed and grab all the riches of this life. We see it even in the disciples who squabbled about who was going to be considered the greatest among them.

That is too small of a risk. What is the greatest risk that anyone can take? What do you think? It's love. Love is THE greatest risk. Nothing else puts us in a more vulnerable place, love causes us to give of ourselves to the one(s) we love. Isn't that what Jesus did? Isn't the greatest risk ever taken, the risk of Jesus loving us? Giving completely of Himself on the cross MUST be the greatest risk ever taken. Jesus said, *Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friend. (John 15:13 NIV)*

Love is the greatest risk and Jesus took that risk and laid down His life for you and for me, His friends. *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. (John 13:34 NIV)*

We can get excited by this, "Yes Jesus, I want to and I want to follow you." But, we know the result, it is the same as Peter's, *Then Jesus answered, 'Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!' (John 13:38 NIV)*

It seems Peter was thinking self-preservation. Just like walking on water, he must have noticed the storm brewing all around him and took his eyes off Jesus. The reality is we need to risk our lives by giving them completely to Jesus. By loving Him trusting Him to do what He will with us. We love what we give our self to. And that is where we should continually take a RISK. What do you love?

Remember the last chapter of *John*? Jesus calls Peter to take a risk, keep focused on ME. *After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"*¹

"Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know I love you."

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him.

Jesus repeated the question: "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I love you."

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said.

A third time he asked him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep.

"I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and

take you where you don't want to go." Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, "Follow me." (John 21:15-19 NLT)

In other words, RISK it all for Me, Peter. Entrust your life to me and the only way you're going to make it through is by loving me. I can be trusted; you know I love you. You saw me on a cross, you know I was dead and, in a tomb, you have seen me now alive again! It's all for you!! You can love me because you know how much I love you. It is really NOT a risk at all. It is sure and certain hope. The world so needs to hear this message of Jesus' love.

Otherwise, even the greatest risks are temporary and fleeting. Consider these words of *New Testament* scholar NT Wright, *We too in our world have discovered so much, learned so much, invented so much, and yet are still without power to do many of the things that really matter.*

We have invented wonderful machines for making war, but nobody yet has found one that will make peace. We can put a man on the moon, but we can't put food into hungry stomachs. We can listen to the songs the whales sing on the ocean floor, but we can't hear the crying of human souls in the next street.

Maybe our risks have been too small, too self-focused...And yet, we know the One who risked it all Who is Peace, and Life, shown by His perfect love. Jesus is calling us to love as well. To love Him with everything we that we are.

And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to His purpose for them. (Romans 8:28 NLT) RISK it all!! Love the Lord!

And I am convinced that nothing can ever separate us from God's love! Neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither our fears for today, nor our worries about tomorrow, - not even the powers of hell can separate us from God's love. No power in the sky above or in the earth below – indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38-39 NLT)

Grow in loving Jesus. Risk it all for Him. Spend time with Him, focus on Him, commit every area of your life to Him. Our love will grow, and we will risk and love others as a result.

We love because He first loved us...AMEN.

Announcements

Flower Dedications

Altar flowers are given to beautify our church. If you would like to sign up for a Sunday either sign up on the information hallway bulletin board or call Karen Mack 952-831-7428. Altar flowers are \$30.

Mitten Tree Items Delivered

The Mitten Tree donations were accepted by Theresa at Trinity First Lutheran School in Minneapolis on Tuesday, Jan. 26. "Thank you for your donation and your continued support of Christian education!" says Theresa.

Thank You

Thank you for the many items given for the Baby Shower for New Life Family Services in January. It was a great success! A delivery of these items will be made in February.



HYMN Bible Study

Our next HYMN Bible Study will be held on Tuesday, February 16th at 6:30 pm. We will be meeting in the sanctuary again to be able to maintain our 6ft. social distancing. Please read Month 5, Weeks 1-5, pages 1-19. We will be completing the Month 5 Monthly Reflection together. Hymns covered this month are: *Oh, Love that Wilt not Let Me Go*, *Holy, Holy, Holy*, *This is My Father's World*, *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, and *I Need Thee Every Hour*.

Congregational Voter's Meeting

There will be a Congregational Voters' Meeting on Sunday, February 14, 2021 after the 9:30 am service. Our Annual Report for the 2020 year will be shared.

Facebook and Instagram

Check out Mount Hope's Facebook page for services and posts. You can click on the **share button**  or the **like button**  and Mount Hope's posts-spreading the Good News of Jesus with your friends and family!

Open Enrollment

Registration for the 2021-22 school year opens to the public on February 1. If you know of anyone looking for preschool, please have them contact Kim in the office or direct them to our website. Mount Hope cares for children starting at 33 months of age. We would love to reach more of our neighbors.

In-Person Worship and COVID-19

Wear your mask properly



Use the following self-assessment

If your answer to any of the following is “yes”, you may not attend in-person church and should seek consult from your physician.

Are you or anyone in your household experiencing the COVID-19 symptoms? (see below)

Is anyone in your household waiting for COVID-19 test results?

Are you a “close contact” to someone who tested positive for COVID-19?

Do you have one of the following “more common” symptoms?

- New onset or worsening cough
- Difficulty breathing
- Fever of 100.4 F or higher
- New loss of taste or smell

Do you have two of the following “less common” symptoms?

- Chills
- Muscle pain
- New onset of severe headache
- Sore throat
- Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
- Excessive fatigue
- New onset of nasal congestion/ runny nose

Wash your hands frequently and maintain six feet of distance between yourself and others.

Sunday Worship Schedule

9:30am In-Person Worship

Services Online at

www.mthopelutheran.org/sermons

Phone: 952-888-5059

Email: church@mthopelutheran.org

Website: www.mthopelutheran.org

YouTube Channel: Mount Hope
Lutheran Church

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