



Hope Lutheran Church Summer Worship Service *September 1, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.*

We would like to express our appreciation for being able to meet on the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Snuneymuxw First Nation. May we always look for ways to confront past and current injustices, prevent future injustices, and support Snuneymuxw governance and jurisdiction.

Welcome & Announcements

Call to Worship

God has lavished us with every perfect gift from above and called us to living intimacy through the beloved one, Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Thanksgiving at the Font

Holy God, holy and merciful, holy and mighty, you are the river of life, you are the everlasting wellspring, you are the fire of rebirth.

Glory to you for oceans and lakes for rivers and streams. Honour to you for cloud and rain, for dew and snow. Your waters are below us, around us, above us: our life is born in you. You are the fountain of resurrection.

Praise to you for your saving waters: Noah and the animals survive the flood, Hagar discovers your well. The Israelites escape through the sea, and they drink from the gushing rock. Naaman washes his leprosy away, and the Samaritan woman will never be thirsty again.

At this font, holy God, we pray: **Praise to you for the water of baptism and for your Word that saves us in this water. Breathe your Spirit into all who are gathered here and into all creation. Illumine our days. Enliven our bones. Dry our tears. Wash away the sin within us, and drown the evil around us. Satisfy all our thirst with your living water, Jesus Christ, our Saviour, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.**

Gathering Hymn #818 O Master, Let Me Walk With You

- 1 **O Master, let me walk with you
in lowly paths of service true;
tell me your secret; help me bear
the strain of toil, the fret of care.**

- 2 **Help me the slow of heart to move
by some clear, winning word of love;
teach me the wayward feet to stay,
and guide them in the homeward way.**

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3 **Teach me your patience; share with me
a closer, dearer company,
in work that keeps faith sweet and strong,
in trust that triumphs over wrong,**

4 **In hope that sends a shining ray
far down the future's broad'ning way,
in peace that only you can give;
with you, O Master, let me live.**

Text: Washington Gladden, 1836-1918, alt.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit is with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer of the Day

Unchanging God, you have blessed us forever through the Beloved One, Jesus Christ our Lord. Born again by your word of truth, let us live out your love, doing your word, caring for the weak and vulnerable in their distress, and ever pursuing your reign of justice, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

Children's Corner

First Reading: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

So now, Israel, give heed to the statutes and ordinances that I am teaching you to observe, so that you may live to enter and occupy the land that the Lord, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. You must neither add anything to what I command you nor take away anything from it, but keep the commandments of the Lord your God with which I am charging you. You must observe them diligently, for this will show your wisdom and discernment to the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, 'Surely this great nation is a wise and discerning people!' For what other great nation has a god so near to it as the Lord our God is whenever we call to him? And what other great nation has statutes and ordinances as just as this entire law that I am setting before you today?

But take care and watch yourselves closely, so as neither to forget the things that your eyes have seen nor to let them slip from your mind all the days of your life; make them known to your children and your children's children.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

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Second Reading: James 1:17-27

Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change. In fulfillment of his own purpose he gave us birth by the word of truth, so that we would become a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

You must understand this, my beloved: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger; for your anger does not produce God's righteousness. Therefore rid yourselves of all sordidness and rank growth of wickedness, and welcome with meekness the implanted word that has the power to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not merely hearers who deceive themselves. For if any are hearers of the word and not doers, they are like those who look at themselves in a mirror; for they look at themselves and, on going away, immediately forget what they were like. But those who look into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and persevere, being not hearers who forget but doers who act—they will be blessed in their doing. If any think they are religious, and do not bridle their tongues but deceive their hearts, their religion is worthless. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Word of God, word of life.

Thanks be to God.

Gospel: Mark 7:1–8, 14–15, 21–23

The Gospel according to Mark

Glory to you, O Lord.

Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?' He said to them, 'Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written,

“This people honours me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me;

in vain do they worship me,

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teaching human precepts as doctrines.”

You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.’

Then he called the crowd again and said to them, ‘Listen to me, all of you, and understand: there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.’ For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.’

The Gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

Sermon

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23



We had a worker at the house to install some flooring last week He had the skills and the right tools and did a great job. He knew what he was doing and I asked him what it was like to be able to do that. He said, *“If you try to fix something but you don’t really know what you are doing... you’ll make it worse. Take it from me, I know! I love this work and I’m happy to know what I am doing, but when it comes to computers...I haven’t got a clue!”*

His heart is in his work. If we don’t know what we are doing from deep in our heart, problems will probably result. So says Jesus today.

Pointing fingers

We drop in on a meal with Jesus and his disciples. They didn’t use tables and chairs or plates and cutlery like we do. There was a lot of food handling. Flat bread, meats and vegetables were passed around. That day they were watched. The action of a few of his disciples was challenged. Some did not go through a ritual hand washing before eating. Some did, I guess. Those who didn’t were centred out. In other words, even among his followers, there wasn’t uniformity of practice. Some held to old traditions while others just enjoyed the company and the food.

Like a mother bear, Jesus went after those pointing fingers. He used their own prophetic tradition to teach them about hypocrisy; raised the topic of the heart; and spoke against being judgmental because it can lead us into trouble. Shaming family members or others because of appearance, lifestyle choices, or failure may create divisions that can never be sorted out.

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When we lived in Saskatoon, I remember seeing a teenager wearing a long face and a sandwich sign walking back and forth in front of a store in the mall. The sign read: *I stole from this store.* My daughter said to me, “*Dad, why would his parent ever agree to that!*”

If we don't sort out what is “really” important in relationships, we may end up having to live with regret. Jesus told the Pharisees to “quit the finger pointing.”

Jesus says that the steadfast love of God is our starting place. Then we are not making impulse decisions or letting some past tradition guide us, but are taking our heart first to God, and learning to trust in a greater care.

Jesus uses compassion as he protects his disciples from unkind verbal assault. Living by God's mercy and grace is always the road we are on with Jesus when we hear his words, “*Follow me.*”

Inside out

Jesus turns things inside out. In the Bible the heart is presented as the innermost part of our being: the source of energy and emotions. It includes our thinking and is our point of contact with God.

The heart is like the water in an aquarium — needing continuous filtering and aerating, otherwise it soon becomes dark and is not life giving. Inner messiness or damage cannot be fixed by covering up or denial.

Those trying to do damage control in 12 step groups always work at this with the heart in the first three steps:

- 1. We admitted we were powerless ... that our lives had become unmanageable.*
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood (God).*

We don't whitewash the outside ... but seek healing within. That is why if you come forward for prayer and anointing on the 5th Sunday of the month, opening your life “just a tiny crack” with honesty allows the Spirit of God's life some room to work.

Tradition is not bad because it can give order to our lives, but when it is forced without sensitivity, the problem becomes “traditionalism,” which puts the brakes

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on thoughtful change and welcome. That is what was going on in the story today. It's kind of like the old joke...

“How many Lutherans does it take to change a light bulb?” “What!! Change? Change? Don't do that! My grandfather donated that lightbulb!”

We need to practice clear thinking about our ministry as God's people and be prepared to let some attitudes go. Tradition gives us a church building, furnishings, hymnals and songs and music, someone with a collar, a worship service... We have rich traditions, but if you recall we were compelled change because of the pandemic. The question always is: How does the way we do things serve the great commandment of love?

Heartfelt concern

Our physical hearts circulate life blood throughout these bodies. Whatever is present in the heart moves through us. Hearts are like sponges that soak up attitudes, feelings, ideas... for good or for bad. Hearts stain easily, go cold quickly, can break, or turn to stone. They can be strong and pound with energy and vitality; or be weak, leaving us half-hearted.

The nature of the heart is tricky. Without the nurturing love of God, it begins to serve only itself. According to Jesus, our biggest challenge can be the darkness of the heart.

Thankfully, God creates a new heart and a right spirit within us.

I fondly remember Dr. Bill Hordern, past president of the Saskatoon Lutheran Seminary when I was a student there. Every time he lead chapel he prayed words that still ring in my heart:

***“Lord, make us masters of ourselves that we might become servants of others.
Take our lips and speak through them.
Take our ears and hear through them.
Take our hands and work through them.
Take our hearts and set them on fire!”***

How is your heart today?
Amen.

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Hymn of the Day #772 Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways

- 1 Oh, that the Lord would guide my ways
to keep his statutes still!
Oh, that my God would grant me grace
to know and do his will!

- 2 Order my footsteps by your word
and make my heart sincere;
let sin have no dominion, Lord,
but keep my conscience clear.

- 3 Assist my soul, too apt to stray,
a stricter watch to keep;
and should I e'er forget your way,
restore your wand'ring sheep.

- 4 Make me to walk in your commands,
'tis a delightful road;
nor let my head or heart or hands
offend against my God.

Text: Isaac Watts, 1674-1748, alt.

Prayers of Intercession

Drawn together in the power of the Holy Spirit, we pray with confidence for the church, God's good creation, and all who are in need.

A brief silence.

God of every generation, give the church a sense of purpose and belonging. Sustain and build up leaders and lay people as we accompany one another in our life with Christ. We also pray for: **Bishop Kathy Martin**; for *Our Redeemer Lutheran* in Penticton; and *Trinity Anglican + Lutheran Church* in Port Alberni Merciful God, **receive our prayer.** Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

God of creation, you named humans as co-creators with you. Where the earth cries out in pain, bring wholeness. Guide governments and industry, that environmental laws and practices seek to heal and not harm. Bring relief and justice to people and places suffering from climate catastrophe across our world. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

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Sovereign God, we pray for local communities of every kind: rural and urban; established and new. Lead those in authority to seek the good of all through their words and actions and to mentor others in honest and generous ways. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Healing God, you draw near to all who are hurting. Be with all who desire relief from chronic and acute illness, cancer, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Strengthen health care workers, therapists, and caregivers. Tend to those who are close to our hearts, especially...

*Ahmad H; Ana B; Anne-Marie B; Bill & Donna B; Carolyn B;
Chris B & family; Carol D; Gary G; Elizabeth H; Dennis K; Kari K;
Donna & Larry K; Ryan K; Charlotte M; Colleen M; Lilah M; Mary M.
D; Carole O; Paula O; Colin V; John & Marily; Lorraine & Al; Kristi;
Miriam; Tania; Pastor Kristen Steele; Zack...*

Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

On this Labor Day weekend we remember and give thanks for all who have fought for workers' rights around the world. Continue to improve working conditions and establish fair wages so that all people may thrive. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Comforting God, console us as we mourn our departed friends and relatives. We hold fast to the promise that death has been defeated by our Savior Jesus Christ. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

We entrust these and all our prayers to you, holy God, in the name of your beloved child, Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Sharing the Peace

Offering

The Meal

The Lord is with you.

And also with you,

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

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It is right to give our thanks and praise... *(the pastor continues...)*

Hymn #473 Holy, Holy, Holy *(sung twice)*

Holy, holy, holy, my heart, my heart adores you.

My heart is glad to say the words: You are holy, God.

Text: Argentine traditional

In the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread *(raise the bread)* and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples saying: *Take and eat. This is my body given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me.*

And again, after supper, he took the cup *(raise the cup)*, gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: *This cup is the new covenant in my blood shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.*

Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil.

For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever.

Amen.

Communion *(those on Zoom will be communed first, and then those in the sanctuary)*

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

Happy are those who trust in the Lord.

Bread: "Take and eat, this is the body of Christ, given for you."

Cup: "Take and drink, this is the blood of Christ, shed for you."

Communion Hymns

Hymn #801 Change my Heart, Oh God

Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.

Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.

You are the potter; I am the clay.

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**Mold me and make me; this is what I pray.
Change my heart, O God; make it ever true.
Change my heart, O God; may I be like you.**

Text: Eddie Espinosa, b. 1953

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Hymn #685 Take My Life, That I May Be

- 1** Take my life, that I may be
consecrated, Lord, to thee;
take my moments and my days;
let them flow in ceaseless praise.

- 2** Take my hands and let them move
at the impulse of thy love;
take my feet and let them be
swift and beautiful for thee.

- 3** Take my voice and let me sing
always, only, for my King;
take my lips and let them be
filled with messages from thee.

- 4** Take my silver and my gold,
not a mite would I withhold;
take my intellect and use
ev'ry pow'r as thou shall choose.

- 5** Take my will and make it thine,
it shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is thine own,
it shall be thy royal throne.

- 6** Take my love; my Lord, I pour
at thy feet its treasure store;
take myself, and I will be
ever, only, all for thee.

Text: Frances R. Havergal, 1836-1879, alt.

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Blessing

In each breath this day, may you have peace.

In each step this day, may you have grace.

In each word this day, may you share compassion.

In each encounter this day, may God's loving presence be known.

Amen.

Sending Song #534 Savior Again to Your Dear Name

- 1 Savior, again to your dear name we raise
with one accord our parting hymn of praise;
once more we bless you ere our worship cease,
then, lowly bending, wait your word of peace.**

- 2 Grant us your peace upon our homeward way;
with you began, with you shall end the day;
guard all the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,
that in this house have called upon your name.**

- 3 Grant us your peace, Lord, through the coming night;
for us transform its darkness into light.
Keep us from harm and danger till the dawn;
your evening presence promise to your own.**

- 4 Grant us your peace throughout our earthly life,
our balm in sorrow, and our stay in strife;
then, when your voice shall bid our conflict cease,
call us, O Lord, to your eternal peace.**

Text: John Ellerton, 1826-1893, alt.

Go in peace. You are the body of Christ.

Thanks be to God.

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Worship Assistants Today

Hymnologist: *John Collett* (musician selecting hymns):

Reader: *Al Pope*

Prayers: *Cynthia Cantelon*

Communion Assistants: *Marilyn, Carolyn*

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Zoom Hosts: John, Gail

Zoom Greeters: *Dorothy Pagan, Linda Harvey, Bill Fehr*

Usher: *Peter Clark*

Musician: *Pippa Williams*

Readings for Sunday, September 8 — Pentecost 16
Isaiah 35:4-7a; James 2:1-17; Mark 7:24-37

Announcements

Today will be the final “*Summer Service* for this year.” **Next Sunday, September 8** we will be returning to the use of sung liturgy. This fall we will be using ***Setting 4*** (page 149 ff) for our worship services.

The *Zoom Bible Study* will be returning on Tuesday, September 10 @ 1:30 pm. The first session will be on Zoom and we will discuss the possibility of changing to a Zoom and In-Person study.