

Good morning,



Last year, a friend of mine donated some leftover stone from his wife's life of sculpting to the Rock and Gem club of which I am a member. They were thrilled to receive such a gift. In that collection of large pieces, there was some pink **Alabaster**, a soft, nearly translucent stone that is easily worked with. Alabaster is mentioned in the Bible. Back in Jesus' day sculptors got alabaster from quarry workers and then turned it into statues, vases, and other delicate containers. They made a living in such ways. These works of art were sold, shipped and collected for special purposes.

One stone-worker created long necked bottles of alabaster that were hollowed out to be used for liquid. Simultaneously, in the far or middle east, **nard** perfume was processed from the Spikenard plant. When imported it was very expensive (*on Amazon: 100ml for \$35*). Being a powerful aromatic that lingered when used, it would trigger memories of past moments. For example, when I smell lilacs I am always reminded of the lilac plants that grew near my grandmother's home.

An alabaster container of nard was in the possession of a woman who came forward, broke the neck of the flask and anointed Jesus with the entire contents (**Mark 14: 3-9**). After being criticized by some present because it could have been sold and the funds used for the poor, Jesus came to her defence and said, **"She has done what she could"** and added that her action would never be forgotten. Her great love would always be a reminder of his even greater love on the cross for us all. We always honour the gifts of love that any of us bring in response to the one who loved us first. Every gift put forward has a story of its own. Doing what we can always leads to blessing. Thanks for all you do here at *Hope Lutheran Church*.

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Coming up at Hope:

Sept 6 @ 8:30 a.m. *Men's Group* in person and on Zoom (*University Chaplain Austin Penner* will join us)

Sept 8 @ 10:00 a.m. *Sunday Worship* (Zoom opens at 9:30 a.m.) We will be using *Setting 4* in the hymnal.

Sept 8 @ 6:00 p.m. at *St Paul's Anglican Church* — Induction of Vernon Foster as new Rector.

Sept 10 @ 1:30 p.m. — *Tuesday Afternoon Bible Study* begins on Zoom

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The *Sunday service* and *invitation to Zoom for worship* will appear in your email as usual on Saturday morning.

The Lord is with us.

Pastor Terry