

The newsletter of Hope Lutheran Church

# The Voice of Hope

JANUARY 2020

*“Knowing and sharing the good news of Hope in Christ”*



Pastor Daniel Severson

**D**ear Friends,

In our midweek class, we are looking at how the Christian faith revolutionized the values and world

-view of the west to such an extent that we virtually take them for granted whether we are Christian, atheist, agnostic, or whatever else. In fact, most of the arguments against Christianity are based on values that originate with Christianity, such as the idea that we should not be self-righteous, or that religion should not be a source of hatred for others. Because this took place over the span of many years, we are also learning about many important developments in church history and the culture of the western world.

For example, where did the idea that all people are of equal value come from? Before the Apostle Paul articulated this so clearly in his letters to the various churches, no one believed that, aside from the Jews from whence Christianity arose. From this came the idea of equal justice, an idea that would have generated a lot of laughter among Gentiles in the pre-Christian era. Who believes in equal justice for slaves and the aristocracy? Nothing could be more absurd. Or, how about the idea that communities and the body politic are responsible for their poor and vulnerable populations? Again, to the ears of Gentiles before the advent of Christianity, people would have scoffed at that. The Romans, within whose empire Christianity spread, treated the poor as human debris. Slaves were not even offered burial when they died. They were fed to scavengers, which is one reason Joseph of Arimathea donated his tomb to Jesus. During the Middle Ages, this idea went so far that canon lawyers decided that the rich owed the poor what they needed. If a poor man stole bread from someone who had plenty, the rich person was charged with the crime of failing to provide and the poor man was let off. Of course, since the rich had all the power, this rule was seldom enforced. And, what about the idea that

people who committed crimes, or people who have messed-up their lives in some way ought to be given a chance, or chances to change? In other words, where did the idea that all of us deserve to be shown mercy, forgiven if we ask for it, and allowed the chance for redemption? Prior to Christianity, this idea was foreign to everyone save Jews, who had the advantage of knowing who God is. Prior to Christianity, torture of criminals was routine. That a person could be redeemed from destructive behavior, and change for the better was pretty much absent from anyone's assumptions concerning human nature. That all people deserve certain rights, freedoms, the necessities of life such as food and shelter, equal treatment; we take values such as these for granted. Did people always believe in these ideals? NOT. These are just a very few of the revolutionary ideas that originate with Christianity. Not that Christians always lived up to their beliefs; but when they did not, it was an appeal to the values of their faith that became the basis of taking corrective action.

But perhaps the most revolutionary of all was the idea that redemption comes through suffering. Before Christ, undergoing abuse, rejection, or suffering violence without seeking revenge was considered shameful. This was the primary reason people could not understand a religion wherein the Lord was a crucified criminal. People who believed in this were objects of derision, scorn, and even hatred. People admired and imitated only the strong and the victors. Hercules was the Greek hero who won every battle, killing numerous foes. It was said that he was transformed into a god when he died because he was able to slay any and all adversaries. Who do we admire today if not people who are willing to suffer for the good of others, people who advocate for non-violence, and people who give their lives in service to a just cause? In fact, today, we build social policy on the basis, not only of equality before the law, but also on the basis of rectifying past wrongs. The policies of the so-called “great society” and the laws based on the civil rights act are only two such examples. Social Security, Medicare, food stamps, welfare programs, the right to sue for grievances, hate crimes legislation; we could go on and on.

## CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

What are the values that undergird these social policies? They didn't come from any of the imperial powers of the past. They are values that have so saturated our culture that we virtually take them for granted. Atheists want to say that these values are based on reason. That's what every tyrannical power in the twentieth century thought from the Soviets to the Nazis. "We reject the wimpy values of Christianity with its ethic of love and its willingness to suffer! Only the strong prevail." Look at nature after all. The survival of the fittest is the foundation of an entire theory of how different species have arisen over time. There is reason for you. Reason without the values that come from the Christian faith can easily lead to genocide, and it has. In fact, the arguments atheists use against Christianity are Christian. "Religion leads to conflict, hatred, and violence," is the tired old argument. While many Christians have used their religion as a bludgeon against enemies, they did so only by betraying Christ himself. When Christians actually practice what they preach, they treat others as they would like to be treated.

Another group wants to claim "humanism" as the source of these values. The question is, "Humanism according to whom?" There are many versions of what is truly good from a human point of view. But the rebuttal of this argument is simple. What is claimed as "humanistic values" originated with Christ. No one cherished and loved human beings more than Jesus Christ. "The very hairs on your head are counted," he observed. Or, "Why are you anxious? Look at the birds. Your Heavenly Father feeds them. You are of much more value than they." The idea that we can become truly human in our values without the love of God is like saying we can be physically healthy without good food and exercise. This is not to say that there are no good people who don't believe in God. Rather, the values that make a good person originated with the revelation of God in Christ. They did not arise out of the void or in a cultural vacuum.

The story of how Christianity has revolutionized our values and world-view, and of how we in the west have betrayed those values at times, such as during the period of the Spanish Inquisition, or when the CIA's use of torture to extract information became a scandal, and of how we have taken corrective action when such things happen, is a fascinating ride through history. We are going to pick up this story in the 1200's when theology laid the foundations for science on Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 pm. Lectures on everything

Lectures on everything we have covered thus far are available upon request. In the future, we will look at how the "me too" movement can be traced back to the idea that a person's body is "the temple of the Holy Spirit" and therefore should not be abused by others, (and by the way, when nuns took vows of chastity, they were saying the same thing, namely, our bodies are ours to use for the glory of God, not the lust of men) and the notion that the victims of historical abuse also need to have their story told, and many other familiar ideas that we take for granted. Please join us. An awareness of history is essential if we are to understand the present. Anyone who is not blinded by hatred of Christianity, or who does not understand its values, cannot perceive its all pervasive influence on our ideals. See you in class.

Blessings, Pastor Dan

## Pastor Paul's Notes



The feast of Epiphany (manifestation") concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to beacons of light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

\*\*\*\*\*

### Senior Ministry

Seniors will gather for "Game Day" on Tuesday, January 7 in Nielsen Hall, 12:30—1:00 pm. Bring a lunch and any games you wish to play. Welcome!!

On the 3rd Thursday, Jan 16, we will have a lunch-outing, the restaurant to be decided. See the bulletin or we determine the place on the 7th.

Happy New Year !!!



*Message from  
our  
Council President*

A week before Christmas, I had a chance to meet my sister Linda for breakfast. She had flown down from Seattle the previous day to attend a Christmas dinner at Christ The King Lutheran Church in Fremont where she and her family belonged before moving away. She still has many friends there. We had a good chunk of time to chat and eat, but she had a flight to catch, and I had a day full of errands to run. As we ended our conversation, she mentioned that there had been a fire at CTK, and the damage sounded extensive. It did not make the news outlets. Apparently, someone had rolled a garbage dumpster up close to the building and lit a fire in it to keep warm. The church office and the sanctuary were damaged, and it will be months before they will be able to move back in. Meanwhile, they are holding services in their parish hall.

That reminded me of another church fire almost twenty years ago up in Lynnwood, Washington. My college roommate, Rick Rouse, was pastor of that church, Trinity Lutheran. That fire started in the middle of the night, leading to a total loss of the sanctuary building. Police detectives determined that the fire was set by an arsonist; there were several other arson fires in the area, all occurring within a short span of time. Nobody was killed or injured, but property damage was devastating in most cases. The police developed a modus operandi (M.O.) of the arsonist. What I remember from talking with Rick is that they knew that the arsonist's car was a Chrysler product, that he was meticulous about not getting dirty – all the fires were set at waist level or higher, and that he used a cell phone – not many people had them in those days. The police knew where he was when he made each phone call – this information used to appear on cell phone bills. The police publicized some of these details. The arsonist worked for a family-owned marketing business. Too many things clicked leading his father to suspect that his son might be involved. He went to his office in the evening to check his company's cell phone bill; each call in the police listing matched a call in the bill. He made what I am sure was a heart-breaking decision to turn his son in. The arsonist is in prison for life. In an ironic twist, the father was given the reward money. In a very public setting, covered by national news media, he pre-

sented the reward check to Rick to be used in rebuilding Trinity. Rick visited the arsonist many times in prison and even saw him each time he returned to Washington after moving away. Difficult as it would seem to be, Rick felt called by Christ to personally forgive the arsonist. From this experience, he wrote a book called, *"Fire of Grace: The Healing Power of Forgiveness."* It's a compelling tale of how granting forgiveness changed Rick's life. Rick has moved back to Washington and occasionally visits the arsonist in prison.

Another church fire that was more local and caused me to grieve was the fire that destroyed St. Paulus Lutheran Church in San Francisco. It was a distinctive one-hundred-year-old Gothic-style redwood church modeled after the cathedral in Chartres, France with its two dissimilar spires. For the past 25 years, the congregation, known as the "church without walls," has been meeting in a rented storefront following a series of moves. There is now a future for the property. A developer has purchased the land and drawn up plans for a residential development with a promise to the St. Paulus congregation to provide deeded ground floor space for their ministry.

I want to call your attention to the sparkle that is evident throughout our church campus. We held a clean-up day in November. Two dozen people came with mops, rags, buckets, and other cleaning items and spent three hours doing a variety of jobs. Everybody rolled up their sleeves and found a job to do and did it. The result is amazing. It was good to have this all completed before Thanksgiving. Thanks are due to: Mark and Erica Grimstedt, Lyle and Marilyn Johnson, Marlys Jungroth, Pat Duvall, Shirley Klemens, Bill Hroziencik, Ellen Leaf, Skip Dahl, Karl Voss, Elaine Dummmler, Kris and Jerry Brooks, Hank Harper, Jerry Milner and Isabella, David and Mary Phillips, Peggy Shoemaker and Caitlin Holl, Heidi Waters, Nancy Kehl, and Margo and Bill Kannenberg. Having worked up an appetite, we were treated to hearty soups prepared by Heidi Waters and Peggy Shoemaker. Thank you, everyone!

Please plan on attending our semi-annual meeting on Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup>, immediately after worship. The main topic to be covered at this meeting is our budget for 2020. Our treasurer Margo Kannenberg and members of the budget committee have discussed all aspects of the budget with the goal of making it as reasonable and realistic as possible and its presentation to the congregation as

straightforward as possible. Please help us meet our quorum so that the meeting will not need to be re-scheduled. Adjusting the size of our required quorum is one of the items being discussed by our constitution committee, but that's a topic for another time, perhaps this meeting. Happy New Year!

## SAVE THE DATE!!

Valentine's Luncheon

Sunday, Feb, 9, 2020 – During Café Hope

Please save the date and join us Sunday, Feb 9, 2020, during Café Hope, for our Valentine's Luncheon. There will be games, great food, and (hopefully) live music. No need to sign up – just show up in your Valentine's Day finery. More details will be available in the February voice. If you have any questions, please contact Sandi Kane/Evangelism Committee. Tel: 415-902-0958.



Holy Hermansen	1/4
Jack Coyne	1/20
Anders Voss	1/20
Margo Kannenberg	1/21
Gregory Pedro	1/21



Jerry Butler	1/25
Douglas Johnson	1/27
Marilyn Johnson	1/27
Gilbert Schroeder	1/28

## Special Thanks

Dear Family of Hope and the Altar Guild,

Thank you for the beautiful tribute on December 1st in dedicating a new Advent Wreath for use in worship at Hope. We are pleased that memorial monies given in memory of our mother, Elis Nielsen, were used to make the purchase. Thank you to Helen Hanlon and team for selecting something beautiful and useful. Also, a special thank you to our Aunt Margit Hansen who hosted Cafe Hope that day. Hope has been central in our family's faith life for many years, and you hold a prominent place in our hearts.

Lovingly, in Christ,

Lisbeth Nielsen and Dorothy Nielsen Dallum

## Matching Challenge Gift

### Matching Challenge Update

Thank you to all the Hope members and friends who have so generously given donations to the challenge fund during the month of December. As you recall, a kind and generous person offered to match gifts given to the challenge fund up to \$10,000, that were given through the end of 2019.

As of the writing of this note, **challenge gifts through and including December 22 totaled \$30,035. This does not include the matching gift of \$10,000.** Our challenge budget of \$35,000 has been surpassed and our need to reduce memorial gifts, by up \$40,000 has been lowered a great deal.

Our financial standing as of the end of 2019 will be available at our January congregational meeting on January 26.

Margo Kannenberg,

Treasurer

## Stitches and Ties

On October 19, 39 60"x80" quilts in 3 large boxes were delivered to Advent Lutheran, Morgan Hill, the annual gathering place for Lutheran World Relief quilts and kits. We are thankful for our delivery angels, Bill and Margo.

Quilters are 'on vacation' this month. We will especially appreciate your sewing the pre-arranged quilt-front kits From the big wicker basket in Nielsen Hall.

On January 14, 2020 we will welcome all willing hands. Lunch will include heart-warming pot-luck soup IF EACH PERSON ATTENDING brings one or more cups of an ingredient ready for the soup pot.

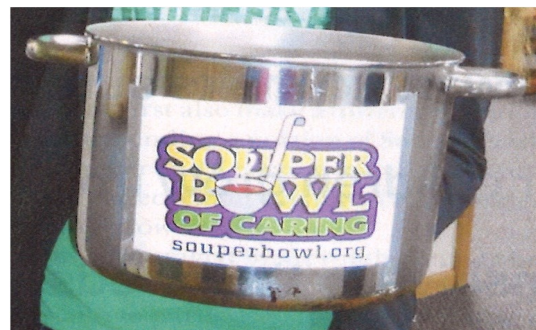
I love this activity; you will, too. (Doris)

*May you and yours have a blessed Advent and Christmas  
And New Year !!!*

## *Souper Bowl of Caring*

Sunday, February 2, 202

During Café Hope



Souper Bowl of Caring is youth across the nation working to fight hunger and poverty in their own communities around the time of the Superbowl football game. In 2019, there were 4,880 participating groups (Hope was one of those groups participating!!), and \$9,710,462 in cash and food items was collected. 100% of the donations go to local charities in our area.

Hope is now registered for 2020. Please join us in Nielsen Hall during Café Hope for a luncheon of soups and salads, sweets, etc. There will also be EMPTY soup pots, one for each of the two Super Bowl teams (still to be determined – go Niners!!), and you can put your donations in the pot of the team you want to win the Super Bowl. Funds raised will go to local charities (last year we supported Samaritan House and Call Primrose) to help fight hunger and poverty. Non-perishable food items are also very welcome.

If you have any questions, please contact Sandi Kane/Evangelism Committee at 415-902-0958

---

## *Educational Opportunities at HOPE Starting Again in January*

In my cover article, I described the midweek class on the influence of Christianity on western culture, which is to say, the values we all live by. When you trace the impact Christians had in the west over time, it is truly amazing at how we can see the connection between Christian values and the values everyone takes for granted. The class was inspired and is informed by a book entitled, “Dominion: How the Christian Revolution Remade the World” by historian of the ancient world Tom Holland. I highly recommend the book. You can also get it in audio, and the reader does a great job in capturing the spirit of the book. However, you don’t have to read the book to benefit from the class. I pass out a synopsis of all the lectures and these are much shorter. (But not as well written) Even if you have not been to class, please consider joining us. Class starts up again on Wednesday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 in the Youth Room.

The Sunday morning Bible study will also resume in January but not until the 19<sup>th</sup> due to other commitments. We are currently going through the gospel according to Luke, and here again, if you would like a synopsis of the lectures, they will be available, including all those chapters we have covered. The good thing about this is that we will be all the way to Jesus’ trial, crucifixion, and resurrection at the time of Holy Week. Perfect! We meet after Café Hope in the Educational building from 11:45 to 12:30. I look forward to seeing everyone again after the holidays, especially the new faces!

## Spark Time Sunday School



Children Ages 3-8 are dismissed after the Children's Message for a 15 minute lesson and return to their parents in church.

Children Grades 3-6 dismissed to Sunday School during Sending Hymn and join parents in Café Hope after 30 minutes of study and activity.

Date	Lesson	Bible Text
Jan 5	God Will Bring Peace	Isaiah 2:1-5
Jan 12	God's Peaceful World	Isaiah 11:1-10
Jan 19	John the Baptist	Matthew 11:2-11
Jan 26	Angels Visit	Matthew 1:18-25

## Ministry Assistants

Date	Assisting Ministers	Communion Assistants	Readers	Spark Leaders
Jan 5	Don Hermansen	Mark and Erica Grimstvedt	Hank Harper	Monika Hastings
Jan 12	Skip Dahl	Don Hermansen and Eric Hoover	Vickie Hanson	Sandi Kane and Hank Harper
Jan 19	Hank Harper	Bill and Margo Kannenberg	Skip Dahl	Judy Jeschke
Jan 26	Heidi Waters	Lucille Housholder and Bill Hroziencik	Helena Dummler	Deb Stucke

## Upcoming Events



January 26, 2020 at 11:00 am

**SENIOR MINISTRY - Jan 7th**

Game Day—in Nielsen Hall at 12:30 pm

**THE ELMS**

Next Elms will be on January 15th.

**PASTOR DAN'S MID WEEK CLASS**

Class ended last Dec 11, 2019 and it will begin again on January 15, 2020 on How Christianity shaped western culture.

**SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**

Bible Study will resume on January 19, 2020.

**EVANGELISM COMMITTEE -**

The next Evangelism Committee meeting — TBD

## Coming Up in the Future

After we finish the current midweek class, we are going to turn to another of my favorite topics, and I hope yours as well. The class will be entitled "WHOSE WHO IN THE BIBLE." We are going to cover the major figures in each period of biblical history from the Patriarchs, to Moses and the Exodus, to Joshua and the conquest, to Sampson and the Judges, King David, Solomon, Ahab, the Prophets, King Josiah, and last but not least, Daniel. I anticipate that this will be an entertaining and informative class since the story of each of these characters and the events that surround their lives are very dramatic. The book by that name published by National Geographic is very well done with amazing illustrations and first rate scholarship. We will also talk about how the lives of these biblical figures can serve as models for our own lives. Class will meet at the usual time, Wednesdays at 1:00 in the Youth Room. I'm thinking it will start in mid-February. Exact times will be included in the bulletin announcements.

Hope Lutheran Church  
600 W. 42nd Ave.  
San Mateo, CA 94403

Presorted  
NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
San Mateo, CA  
Permit No. 160

Address Service Requested

January 2020



**Voice of Hope Deadline for February: Friday, January 17**



## Hope Lutheran Church

650-349-0100

helc@pacbell.net

[www.hopelutheransanmateo.org](http://www.hopelutheransanmateo.org)

[www.facebook.com/hopelutheransanmateo](http://www.facebook.com/hopelutheransanmateo)

**Sunday Worship at 10:00 AM**

**Sunday School at 11:00 AM**

