

The Voice of Hope

JUNE 2020

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



Pastor Daniel Severson

Dear Friends,

The gospel texts for the Easter season this year have been taken from Jesus’ so-called “farewell discourse” as recorded in the gospel of John. Previously, I pointed out that this little “sermon” of sorts was designed to help the disciples understand what was going to happen after having had their last supper with Jesus. What Jesus does not do is describe what they will see, or how they will feel when he is arrested, tried, flogged, mocked, forced to endure unspeakable shame as he carries his cross through the streets of Jerusalem, or when they see him crucified until he dies—or when he rises again!! Rather, he interprets what it means for him and for them in the days ahead. “Do not be troubled. Believe!” (total trust in God will be required) “There are many dwelling places in my Father’s house. I am preparing a place for you.” Moreover, “I will not leave you orphaned. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. (you will love one another) My Father will send you an advocate: the Spirit of life. In this way, I will be with you.”

Jesus does not get into the details of his crucifixion, his death, or his resurrection. Rather, he interprets for them what it all means. This text is very important for a number of reasons, most of which I don’t have time to get into. But I do want to offer some reflections on one in particular because it has a lot to do with why Christianity has become such an anemic influence on culture and society today. People in general, whether they have been raised in the

church or not, simply don’t take it seriously anymore. It appears to have become irrelevant to life as we experience it, which is why most Lutherans disappear after being confirmed.

Our last midweek class focused on the book “Dominion.” In that book, author Tom Holland rightly called early Christianity, and aspects of it down through history, a “revolution.” This word was used because the Christian faith introduced values and a point of view that literally transformed the way people think, and the values they assume are properly human values. For example, that all people are created equal, that society is responsible to care for the poor and helpless, that all people deserve the basic needs of life, and that everyone ought to be treated equally; these values have not always been observed very well, to put it mildly, but no one really argues against them without some degree of shame because, as Thomas Jefferson put it, they are self-evident. Yes, there have been people, such as Nazi’s, who advocated for the superiority of some races. And yes, some people don’t think we need to care for the less fortunate. And yes, there have been many times when the church has betrayed its own message or replaced it with some idolatrous commitments. However, the Christian faith made the values of compassion and equality the norm in the west, including the idea that people willing to suffer and die for others are heroes.

Unfortunately, various interpretations of the Christian faith have deprived it of its revolutionary power. That’s where the “farewell discourse” comes in. When Jesus said he was preparing a place for his disciples, he was talking about the self-giving love he had for all people—the love that would put him on

CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

the cross, and his followers in danger. Many centuries later, some theologians believed that Jesus suffered and died in order to satisfy God's anger against sinful humanity. In other words, because we could not pay the penalty for sin, and because God needed a guilt offering—someone to be punished for sin—Jesus suffered and died to satisfy God's wrath against sin and thereby make it possible for us to be forgiven. In other words, God was angry and someone had to pay the price! Moreover, so long as people believed that Jesus did that for them, they would go to Heaven. Otherwise—who knows? The text where Jesus said he was preparing a “mansion” for us was assumed to mean that he was making a trip to Heaven so as to get ready for our arrival. Upgrades were definitely needed for the comfort of the occupants.

Unfortunately, this particular interpretation made Christianity primarily an-other worldly religion. In other words, the Christian faith was mostly about a belief that pertained to going to Heaven, and, aside from the need to be a kind and compassionate person like Jesus was; in other words, a “nice guy,” the Christian faith had little to do with transforming the world we live in now. After all, one day, this world would end anyway, so why bother with it.

Unfortunately, people who believe this have not only denied that the atonement was an act of love, not only on Jesus' part but on God's as well; not only have they placed God's anger and wrath at the center of the cross, they have turned Jesus' teachings into an-other worldly message that is difficult to connect with the context of his ministry in Galilee where he was inaugurating the power of God's rule (kingdom) in the lives of people who were oppressed and brokenhearted, as he said he would do when he announced his ministry in Nazareth. He demonstrated his desire to redeem this creation and we, the people who live in it, by healing the sick, the lepers, the blind, the lame the paralyzed, the morally degenerate, and by even raising the dead. In other words, he was inaugurating a new creation in a world

bound by the power of sin and death.

When Jesus said he was preparing a place for us in God's dwelling places, which was John's highly symbolic way of referring to God's kingdom; the new creation where God rules, he was referring to his self-giving sacrifice, made out of love for us, and done in order to overcome the powers that kept us separated from God's transforming love and power. He was referring to the cross and resurrection. By bearing the sin of the world, and by dying and rising for us, he was taking the curse of sin off our shoulders, and overpowering death such that we could live eternally with God. Sin and death are the symptoms that clearly point to the fact that God's “good” creation is under mortal threat. Jesus came to redeem God's creation; to heal and restore it to what it was meant to be at the time God made it. God didn't make creation to ultimately suffer disintegration. He created everything out of his overflowing love, which is why he called it “very good.” Love desires an object of love and God's love created just that when he made all things. So, his purpose with respect to salvation was to save creation as a whole, which is why the book of Revelation contains a vision of the New Jerusalem descending out of Heaven so that God's home could now be with us in a fully redeemed creation. (Revelation 21:1-ff.) His purpose was not to give up on creation and take us someplace else instead called “Heaven.”

This is one of many reasons the Christian church has always been active in ministering in a world of great need. There was a time when churches established hospitals, old age homes' (my Mother worked in one her entire career as a nurse), social service organizations, and food banks. Some still exist but they are a far cry from what they used to be. Of course, it has nothing to do with a particular political ideology. Christians have never assumed that it is our job to redeem society or creation as a whole. This is God's job. However, through his

Pastor's message continues on Page 5.



A Message from your Council President

The shelter in place orders have continued to affect every aspect of our lives. Because my occupation is considered high risk, we are not allowed to do our usual work other than to take care of emergencies. Outside of the office, I no longer do a lot of things that I have always done for myself. I do not shop for groceries. My kids order via Instacart or directly from stores themselves. I have yet to shop at the Costco warehouse. The only thing I get there is gas for the cars; I do not have to interact with anyone to do that. I am certainly getting gas much less often. I am doing some organizing and sorting, both at home and at the office; I have plenty more to do. Now that we may be able to open our office in June, my staff and I are making plans, purchasing equipment and supplies, and setting up new protocols for office procedures.

One thing that I have done more lately is to watch TV. Occasionally, I tune in to one of the network morning shows. I sometimes watch the news in the evening, and I flip from station to station to see which one has yet another half hour of news. One show I routinely have missed is “Sixty Minutes,” although I sometimes get to listen to some of it on the radio. I was thrilled when I finally had a chance to watch the entire broadcast on the evening of Easter. During that show, I saw a teaser for the show that followed, and it appealed to me. I wasn’t paying complete attention (I often read with the TV on), and I decided to watch this show without even knowing its name. I was surprised when I saw the name on the screen as we went to a commercial break: “God Friendened Me.” That drew me in even more. The show centers around a young man whose father is the local bishop. Although this character has become an outspoken atheist, he gets an email from God (they call it the God account) each week

directing him to help someone in trouble. The episode I watched ended on a feel-good note. A few days later, I checked online to make sure I would not miss the next episode. The first mention that popped up on Google said, “God Friendened Me – Canceled.” I felt such disappointment. I read about the show a little further. This was its second season, and it turns out the stars were surprised by the cancelation. I watched the series finale two weeks later. It was a double (two-hour) show. I read that the writers were able to change some of the dialog to create a definite ending.

The show was a hit because it stirred thoughtful conversation about faith, life, and happiness. That seems so unusual nowadays, and I think that is what drew me in. At the end, viewers were given hints that the young man was thinking more seriously about his own faith, and I personally hoped that he returned to the church in which he was raised. It was obvious in the episodes that I was able to see that, although the young man was at odds with his father, his father continued to be a positive influence on him. Knowing how the episodes developed and always ended on a positive note, I hope that I will somehow be able to watch old episodes.

As we continue to shelter in place, our treasurer Margo Kannenberg has posted the April financial results in this issue. The numbers speak for themselves. We are blessed to have ample reserves to weather the COVID-19 storm, but continued deficits will eat into those reserves. I have faith that we will get back on the monthly surplus track after we are able to resume our normal in-person worship services. Take care and be safe.

Don Hermansen

From the Desk of our Treasurer



Treasurer's Report: April 2020

The April financials for the church are as follows:

Church Income	\$19,788
(\$38,757 in April 2019)	
Church Expenses	\$26,823
(\$35,008 in April 2019)	
Church Net Income	-\$7,035
Preschool Net Income	-\$10,579
April Net Deficit.....	-\$17,615

Margo Kannenberg



Hillsdale Peace Pantry

Dear Hillsdale Community,

We want to take a moment to update you on the support we are providing for our families during this difficult time. By now, we are all aware of how challenging this pandemic has been for many families. Our Hillsdale families report deeper levels of need and that they are even being turned away at local emergency food drive-thrus. To help, Hillsdale Peace Pantry distributed biweekly \$100 Target gift cards to families. On March 27, 27 gift cards were distributed, and on May 1, 130 gift cards were distributed. This illustrates the growing number of families in need. In April, we began holding an Emergency Food Drive-Thru at Hillsdale on Fridays. With help from Second Harvest and \$25 bags of groceries purchased at Mi Rancho, we provide a box of food to 140 Hillsdale families each week. We anticipate spending \$4,000 a week to fill 140 boxes of food. Volunteers also deliver boxes to those families that cannot make it to Hillsdale. We hope our drive thru will provide additional resources and support for each family. For

example, thanks to a grant we received from Vans, each student received a pair of brand new Vans shoes at our drive thru the first week. We are working with an amazing group of volunteers, Peninsula Mask Makers, to provide free masks for each family. Our team counsels and supports families in many ways such as helping families understand their housing rights in the event a landlord seeks eviction. Students were provided with chromebooks and access to wifi to help with their online learning.

During the past 12 weeks we have provided over \$29,000 in gift cards and \$4000 each week in food. Without your generous support none of this would have been possible. The collective support of the Hillsdale community for our families is a reminder of the strength and love which exists in the Hillsdale community. Thank you to all of the Hillsdale staff, alums, parents, local churches and community members who have made this level of support a reality. We will continue to support our families for as long we have the resources to do so. Thank you for being part of this beautiful community.

If you would like to help, you can donate through our Hillsdale Foundation Website at <https://bit.ly/2ZysebJ>. Volunteers are also welcome to help with the Friday Emergency Drive Thru on June 5, June 19 and June 26. We maintain safety with all volunteers wearing masks and gloves, and we create stations to maintain social distancing. Families remain in their cars and we place the food in the back seat or trunk. If you would like to help with the drive thru or deliveries, please email Deb Stucke at dls-tucke@gmail.com. You can also contact Brett Stevenson at bstevenson@smuhsd.org.

A special thanks to our community partners: Hope Lutheran Church, Transfiguration Church, Temple Beth-El and SMPD/PAL.

Brett Stevenson,
Assistant Principal, Hillsdale High School

Midweek Bible Studies



NOW AVAILABLE
ONLINE:
THE UNFORGETTABLE
STORIES AND MAJOR
CHARACTERS IN THE
HISTORY OF ANCIENT
ISRAEL

AS TOLD IN THE BIBLE AND SUPPLEMENTED BY
ARCHAEOLOGY AND TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

I have sent out the written lectures (kept as short as possible) through the story of Moses as he confronts Pharaoh. The next written lecture will focus on the journey through the Sinai Desert and the book of Deuteronomy. This will complete the first section of biblical history, namely, the Torah, or, Genesis through Deuteronomy. Next, we will start “The Deuteronomistic History” which begins with Joshua and the conquest of Canaan, and ends with the fall of Judah in II Kings. This will take some time so patience is urged.

So far, I have recorded four lectures.

- 1) Introductory.
- 2) Literary analysis of the Torah.
 - a) Priestly Document. (Ex. Genesis 11:1-2:4b)
 - b) Yahwist Document (Ex. Genesis 2:4b-3:24)
 - c) E-Document (Genesis 7:2-3)
 - d) The Book of Deuteronomy.
- 3) Abraham through the birth of Ishmael
- 4) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob through Jacob’s flight from Esau.

I will continue to add at least one lecture per week. They are not long—30-40 minutes. If you can watch a game show, no problem, except that the lectures actually have content worth listening to. Once you have completed this class, you will all be biblical scholars and we will have a graduation ceremony during church. However, you will have to answer questions in front of the congregation first. Otherwise, as the tester told Kirsten the first time she took the driver’s test, “You flunk.”

Many thanks to Margo for posting the lectures. This would not be possible without her.

Stay well and don’t neglect getting exercise. Now that I am doing this with Kirsten, I am ready to fall over most every night.

Blessings everyone, *Pastor Dan*

PASTOR’S MESSAGE: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

ministry, Jesus inaugurated the process of redemption; That is, he got it started, and he did so by healing the sick and disabled; he did so by casting out demons and thereby demonstrating that God is stronger than evil; he did so by condemning idolatry, the root of all sin, (which is why it’s the first commandment) and by empowering people to show love and compassion. That is, he did so by calling people to follow him, even when that meant suffering for the sake of the good.

To use Paul’s language, he was making us “a new creation” so that we would be able to participate with him in making the world a new creation. Jesus

warned his disciples of persecution precisely because he knew they would have to challenge the power structures that created injustice and poverty. What is so disheartening today is that, when you read the history of how Europeans oppressed the people who were already here in order to get rich; what you don’t read is that the Vatican condemned this, prosecuted some of the perpetrators, and sent the Franciscans to care for them. This doesn’t fit the narrative of the church as “the evil empire.”

Does this sound like an other-worldly religion whose goal is to escape the problems of this world so as to

Pastor’s message continues on Page 6.

Preschool Corner June 2020



The school year has come to an end and so many activities never happened. The children have learned many new things on our weekly Zoom Calls prepared by the teachers. We cancelled Family Night but we were able to have the families sign-up for a social distancing “Walk through the Jungle” to view the children’s art work on our walk way.

Have a great summer. Please be safe and stay healthy. Our prayers are with you and your families.

Blessing, Tracy



PASTOR'S MESSAGE: CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

live in a mansion in the sky? The key to understanding Christianity is Christ himself. Yes indeed , he was preparing a place for us; a place in God’s kingdom; a place where God’s power over all the negative influences in his world are overcome through the power of God’s love and eternal life. God exercised this power through Christ who gave himself, not because his Father wanted a scapegoat, but because he loved us so much that he assumed our sin, suffered its consequences, namely, death, and overcome them for our sake. This he did, not in another world, but in this one. And for this reason, Christians are called to minister here; to visit the sick, and the imprisoned; to feed the hungry, and give water to the thirsty; to take advantage of every opportunity to follow Christ, for he himself said, “In so far as you do it to the least of these, you do it to me.”

Anyone who believes that the Christian faith is only about getting to Heaven is going to miss the fact that Christianity is about changing the world—no, redeeming the world, and that all of us are called to play a part in this God-given vocation. If we want folks to see that what they do and how they live matters; that it is not just about making a living, but that it has a deeper spiritual purpose, and that all callings are a part of that; that whether you are an electrician, a plumber, a garbage collector, an office manager, a laborer, or a “whatever,” you have a role in this divine plan; and that the end goal is eternal life in a kingdom that has no end, we need to make this clear in the ministry of our congregation. How this will work itself out in the end is not our responsibility. That belongs to God, and that’s why Jesus starts his sermon with the simple words: “Believe in God. Believe also in me.”

Blessings, Pastor Dan

My dear friends at Hope,

Thank all of you for your prayers during the time my husband, Bill, was in Yuma Regional Medical Center, after we arrived home on May 2 and his passing on May 7. Your love, phone calls, cards, virtual hugs and support was just what I needed. It is a comfort to know that so many wonderful people are thinking and praying for me every day. On May 13, we had a Celebration of Bill's Life at our home conducted by Pastor Dan via phone.

Hugs, love, prayers and more,

Shirley Klemens & Family

Shirley Klemens



just a note

To all at Hope

Just a note from Jean Grimsby
Aurman, to let you know we are
just fine here in Yuma, AZ

No Virus but no deaths so far.

We will be here for awhile
until the Virus is over with, we
feel safe here in the park

I am sending my offering for
Jan, Feb, Mar & April

Hope all is well with every one
there. Happy Easter

 Jean & Neil



33rd Annual Synod Assembly

As we now live into a "new normal" with COVID-19, "shelter in place" orders, and the desire to actually share the peace with one another, I wanted to let you know that our Synod Assembly scheduled for May has been postponed. The Synod Executive Committee met to support a postponement for sometime this fall.

We are working with the Synod Assembly Planning Committee, the Fresno Convention Center, and the Doubletree Hotel to see when there are viable dates most likely in the fall. There is a possibility the Assembly may occur in another part of our Synod – again, this is a work in progress and I wanted to let you, our congregations, know this information.

While there will be questions on the postponement of our Assembly, I ask for your patience and prayers as the Synod Staff and Synod Assembly Planning Committee work out the details.

Our world awakes each day to something new and different – we may be fearful of the events which surround us but we are people who trust in God's guidance and love.

I thank you for being Church Together!

Deep peace,
Gail Kiyomura
Vice President, Sierra Pacific Synod

JUNE 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2	3	4	5	6 8am Men's Breakfast
7 Online Worship & Café Hope	8	9 9am-1pm Office Open	10	11 9am-1pm Office Open	12	13
14 Online Worship & Café Hope	15	16 9am-1pm Office Open	17	18 9am-1pm Office Open	19	20 8am Men's Breakfast
21 Online Worship & Café Hope	22	23 9am-1pm Office Open	24	25 9am-1pm Office Open	26	27
28 Online Worship & Café Hope	29	30 9am-1pm Office Open				

The Voice of Hope Birthday listing



Eno Ekong 6/3	Wendy Hermansen..... 6/10	Robert Lillo 6/20
Jerry Brooks 6/4	Dustynne Mendes 6/12	Owen Sallander 6/21
Sandi Kane 6/4	June Hendrickson 6/13	Penny Spike 6/23
Sydney Prasad 6/5	Dolores Roscoe 6/14	Shannon Wilson 6/24
Gloria Paulus 6/9	Rea Tucker 6/15	Jason Reed 6/28
Maxine Fisher..... 6/10	Esther Ekong 6/20	



Called to Eternal Rest

William (Bill) Klemens, husband of Shirley Klemens, passed away on May 7, 2020 at the age of 80.

A private service for the family was held at home on May 13.

Shirley has established a memorial fund for Bill at Hope. Donations can be mailed or dropped off at the office.

Upcoming Events at



Worship with us online each week!

We will continue posting our worship services on the Hope website for the foreseeable future—even after we are once again able to resume in-person worship.

The council executive team is carefully following the guidelines from San Mateo county and the state of California for holding in-person worship services. We will notify our members and friends through email and phone updates once we have a date for resuming worship services at Hope.

View or listen to our online service, available every Saturday on our website.

<http://hopelutheransanmateo.org/worship/sermons/>

Special Worship in June

Join us online for special additions to our worship services. Read our weekly email updates for more information.

Sunday May 31, Pentecost Sunday—Our service participants will red that day. Show your solidarity by wearing red as you watch the service.

Sunday June 7th, Holy Trinity Sunday —The ELCA presiding bishop Elizabeth Eaton will deliver the message to all ELCA congregations.

Sunday June 14th, Graduate Recognition Sunday—Join us for a special presentation in our worship service as we honor this year's graduates and wish them well on their future endeavors.

OFFICE REOPENING

Starting in June, our office will be able to open on a limited basis to allow our staff and volunteers to provide essential services for the church. At this time, we plan to have the office open Tuesday and Thursdays from 9am-1pm.

We ask all members and visitors to call or email the office to schedule an appointment before visiting the church. To comply with California's regulations to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we are implementing new procedures for all visitors to the church building. Everyone will be required to submit to a temperature scan before entering the building, and will be required to wear a mask at all times, unless in their own private office. Additionally, we are increasing the frequency of cleaning in common areas, and regularly wiping down commonly touched items with disinfectant, such as doorknobs, light switches, hand rails, and the copy machine.

MENS' BREAKFAST

The Men's Breakfast will continue as a virtual meeting in June. Join us via Zoom for Men's Breakfast on Saturday June 6th and June 20th at 8am. We will complete our history and geography study. On June 20 we will begin a new topic on the Life of Jesus. The link to join the Zoom meeting will be sent by email to all participants.

CAFÉ HOPE

Our weekly congregation social hour continues Sundays at 11am over ZOOM. Join us to connect with members and friends each week. If you have a particular topic that you would like to hear discussed, please contact Pastor Dan or Heidi to make arrangements.

GRADUATE RECOGNITION SUNDAY

We will celebrate this year's graduates on Sunday June 14th. If you have any recent/upcoming graduates that you would like to be included, please email Judy with the graduate's name, date/school they are graduating from, their future plans, and a photo of the graduate (optional but encouraged!) Please send this information no later than Wednesday, June 10th.

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San Mateo, CA 94403

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June 2020

The newsletter of Hope Lutheran Church

The Voice of Hope

Voice of Hope Deadline for June: Friday June 19



Hope Lutheran Church

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www.hopelutheransanmateo.org

www.facebook.com/hopelutheransanmateo

Sunday Worship can be viewed online at

www.hopelutheransanmateo.org/sermons

