

# The Voice of Hope

AUGUST 2020

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



Pastor Daniel Severson

**D**ear Friends,

As of the writing of this article (07/15/2020), I understand that

the state of California has decided to shut down all “non-essential” businesses once again in most counties. Who would have thought? I recall last April, when it seemed as if this virus was at the height of its out of control spread—I was hoping that maybe, just maybe, its influence would wane once summer came, and things would return to a more normal activity level. Since that time, I reviewed all of the advice we were receiving from scientists, government agencies, the media, and others. It has been all over the map. And while politics has crept into the debate over what the best way to handle this is, nevertheless, I think that most people were doing their best to provide helpful advice. Clearly, while some things are obvious, such as, you are more likely to get sick if you are in a crowded and poorly ventilated room with others, it has been difficult to fully understand how Covid-19 is spread. In any case, while I remain hopeful, it looks to me that we are in for a long wait before things will get better. In the meantime, we will continue to provide you with online services and lectures. I hope these have been helpful. I know that many people are experiencing distressing side effects from the limits that have been placed on us. Kirsten has seen these in her patients, and I know people both young and old who are struggling with problems such as loneliness, depression, and, if a person has lost their job, or has a small business that has been shut down, fear of what the future may hold.

Speaking of online services, I received a very insightful email this week regarding my last sermon (07/12). This person pointed out that it seemed as if I had strung a bunch of stories together without making the overall point clear. She was right. After I reviewed the sermon, I thought the same thing, but hoped that, somehow, people would get something out of it. But then, this person decided to listen to it again. Upon reflection, she decided it made sense after all. The point was that our hearts become good soil for receiving the seed of the gospel message when we realize that God made the decision to suffer the consequences of his judgement against our sins. When we place our faith in Christ therefore, we are made righteous for Christ’s sake. I was relieved to find out that she heard the message despite my disjointed presentation.

At the same time, despite the flaws in the delivery, this message can be difficult to fully take in even if the speaker is the Apostle Paul himself. The reason for this has become more dear to me after reading a book entitled “The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided By Politics And Religion” by moral psychologist Jonathan Haidt. Many times in the book, he points out that the best sages in human history have all warned us of the dangers of self-righteousness. He quoted Jesus in Matthew 7:1-5. The last verse reads: “You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor’s eye.” Why is it so difficult for us to judge ourselves and so easy to judge others?

The author points out that moral judgements are not made in a calculating way—for the most part. In other words, we don’t reason moral questions out and then decide on a

## CONTINUED FROM THE FRONT PAGE

position to take. Rather, we more often react intuitively and with emotion. For example, when confronted by someone we may have hurt, the defenses arise, and we come up with the good reasons we said what we did. Or, when we are driving, we simply react to other drivers on a gut level. We don't think about it first. Unfortunately, the same thing happens when we are confronted with an opinion or position we don't like. Rather than trying to see or understand the position of another empathetically, we tend to react at a gut level. Why? Because we have thought long and hard about it? Because we have tried to look at the question from a number of points of view? Usually not. Each of us have our own intuitive and emotional response and so the faults of others are very dear. However, our own faults lie buried even from ourselves.

We cannot understand the suffering of Christ if we don't do a better job of coming to an awareness of our own sins. The mercy, love, and forgiveness of God will not mean much to us if we persist in thinking that we are always right and the other person is wrong. This is why Jesus warned the religious authorities concerning their self-righteous attitudes again and again. This is why he told the parable of the unforgiving servant. (Matthew 18:23-34), and this is why he said, "Let anyone among you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." (John 8:7) An inability to become aware of our own flaws and limitations serves as a blinder to the gospel message. No one who thinks they are already righteous feels the need for the righteousness of Christ.

Nevertheless, God's mercy and willingness to forgive is patient, kind, and never ending. The cross is a clear symbol of this. It is also a clear symbol of the fact that we too ought to be patient and kind to one another. Do we see much of that these days? The more important question is, "Do we see it in ourselves?"

Blessings everyone, Pr. Dan

PS. Don't forget to join us for a Zoom or phone communion service on Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11:00 am.



*A Message from your  
Council President*

For the past few months, we have been consumed with the coronavirus, the disease it causes,

COVID-19, and all the fallout from the restrictions and changes in everyday living that have resulted. It is easy to dwell on the negative, and I have done that in my past three columns. I have done some thinking so, this month, I would like to change course and emphasize the positive.

What holds our congregation together, as in pre-endemic times, is getting together for worship and fellowship. We have recorded our Sunday worship services on Thursday mornings for several weeks now with about ten participants. Our technique and presentation have improved each week, making viewing more interesting and enjoyable. We now show words to the hymns on the screen as they are sung, an invitation to sing along (and I understand that several viewers do sing along). I have always felt that music is the lifeblood of Lutheran worship. It is what connects us with other Lutherans and provides continuity for our worship experience.

As you may realize, our online worship services are directed toward our members. However, they are on an open platform that anyone can access. That provides us with an opportunity. Through our web page administrator, Facebook, and YouTube, we can see how many people look at each page and also see how far our services are broadcast. We do not know names of viewers, but we do know where they are. We have viewers in Norway, the Philippines, and several states. Most of our viewers are local, though. Some may even be members of Hope who find it easier to participate in worship in a virtual manner. I like to think that this provides us with an opportunity for evangelism, both in our neighborhood and far away. Only the Lord knows how people will be affected by our services and other online

offerings such as Bible study class.

It is too easy to allow our experiences during shelter-in-place to drag us down. Little did I know that Presidents Weekend would be the last time I saw our two older kids, their spouses, and our six grandchildren. I was able to spend time with each of my grandkids doing dental check-ups and cleaning their teeth. I have joked to others that this was a wonderful way for me to spend "quality one-on-one time" with each of my grandkids. I was able to talk with them during their appointments. Even the two youngest cousins, who were both four at the time, were eager to sit in the big chair and cooperate fully, a big contrast to six months earlier. They will all be due for their six-month check-ups in August, but we will have to see how we can make that work since both families live outside the Bay Area.

Finally, the executive committee and Pastor Dan have developed a protocol for providing Holy Communion virtually. We are scheduling it on the first Sunday of each month at 11:00 a.m. for a few minutes before we start Café Hope. We do not want anyone to miss this. You can participate either over Zoom or by telephone. Pastor Dan will lead us in the communion liturgy. We only ask that you provide your own bread and wine. This will provide us all an opportunity to receive God's blessings through the means of grace.

Don Hermansen



### *Our New Office Manager*

**P**lease let me take this opportunity to introduce myself as I newly step into the role of office manger. I am looking forward for this new adventure. My name is Ellie Gershenson-Toschi

I have lived in San Mateo all my life. I am married and have a fur baby. I enjoy walking on the beach and hanging out with friends playing board games. I am community minded and excited to be a part of Hope Lutheran Church.

### *An Update from your Council Executive Committee*

**D**ear Mem-  
bers and  
Friends of Hope,

The executive committee of Hope's church council wanted to provide an update to the information we shared last month regarding the resumption of in-person worship at Hope. We have been working together to define a list of criteria to guide our reopening, and we wanted to share this information with the congregation. Our resumption of in-person worship will require that the following conditions have been met:

- In-person worship services are allowed by the State of California and San Mateo County.
- Our governing body, The ELCA Sierra-Pacific Synod is supportive of resuming in-person worship.
- The spread of COVID-19 is stable or decreasing in our community.
- We have the personnel, equipment, and procedures in place to be able to provide both in-person and online worship opportunities to meet the needs of all congregants.

Once we are ready to resume in-person worship, we will follow the guidance for worship provided by the State of California and the CDC. Please let us know if you have additional questions about our reopening plans.

In Christian love,

The Hope Council Executive Committee

Don Hermansen, President  
Karen Reed, Vice-President  
Judy Jeschke, Secretary  
Margo Kannenberg, Treasurer  
Pastor Dan Severson



God's Work Our Hands:  
Samaritan House Donation Drive -  
September 1 through September 20

In year's past, Hope has recognized ELCA's God's Work Our Hand's nationwide service initiative by hosting a barbecue for Samaritan House at their shelter. This will not be possible this year. In its place, Hope will run a donation drive for items that Samaritan House is constantly in need of.

Since the pandemic began, Samaritan House's food distribution has grown 300% and their meal distribution has doubled. They expect that need to only grow. Hope can truly help out, by providing items that are constantly needed, which are:

- Pre-packaged food
- Cases of water
- Toilet paper
- Paper towels
- Hand Sanitizer
- Toiletries (especially soap)
- Sanitizing Wipes
- Cleaning products
- Diapers (especially pull-ups and large sizes)
- Baby wipes
- Formula
- Baby food
- Tents & Sleeping bags

Bins will be available outside the church office and up near the top of 42nd Avenue for drop off of items between September 1 and September 20.

If members prefer to provide a monetary donation, please write a check to Hope Lutheran Church and indicate Samaritan House on the check, and we will make sure that it is used for food distribution. Social Concerns Committee

*From the Desk of our Treasurer*



**Treasurer's Report: June 2020**

The financials for the church are as follows:

June 2020

Church Income .....	\$57,193
(Includes memorial income \$27,507)	
Church Expenses .....	\$25,224
Church Net Income .....	\$31,970
Preschool Net Income .....	<b>-\$2,327</b>
June Net Deficit.....	\$29,643

January-June 2020

Church Net Income:.....	\$48,977
(includes memorial income of \$52,644)	
Preschool Net income: .....	-\$2,699
Net Surplus: .....	\$46,278

Margo Kannenberg



*Hope Joins Amazon Smile*

Are you an Amazon shopper? Do you have friends that order through Amazon? Now, when you shop online at [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com), and select Hope as your charity, Amazon will donate to the church!

Enter this link in your internet browser to go directly to Hope's Smile page and select Hope as your charity.  
<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/94-6028241>

Not all purchases qualify for donations from Amazon, but with this simple initiative we will receive a quarterly donation from Amazon.

Margo Kannenberg

## Virtual Communion at Hope

Sunday August 2 at 11:00 a.m.

We will begin to offer communion online beginning Sunday, August 2 at 11:00am and continuing on the first Sunday of each month. This will be a virtual experience via the Café Hope Zoom Meeting. All you need to participate is to have available some bread and some wine (or grape juice). Pastor Dan will lead us in the communion liturgy, the familiarity of which you should find comforting. This will be a very safe but effective way of taking communion. Fellowship during Café Hope will follow immediately.

For those who are unable to connect to Zoom via a computer or smart phone, you can participate in communion by **simply connecting to Hope's Zoom** meeting via your telephone. Here are the full instructions for Zoom:

Online Link:

<https://zoom.us/j/9790847883>

Meeting ID: 979 084 7883

How to call in from a telephone:  
Dial 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) and

when prompted, enter the Meeting ID: 979 084 7883 followed by the pound (#) key.

### Order of Service for Holy Communion

August 2<sup>nd</sup> at 11am

(P) The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

(P) Let us confess our sins in the presence of God and of one another.

(C) Most merciful God, we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. We have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done and what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name. Amen.

(P) God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith. Amen.

(P) Merciful God, we do not presume to come to your table trusting in our own righteousness, but in your abundant mercy. Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord,

so to eat and drink the body of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, that we may live in him and he in us, now and forever. Amen.

(P) Reading: Psalm 51: 1-12.

(P) Brief Reflection

**(P) Words of Institution: "In the night in which he was betrayed...Again after supper he took the cup..."**

#### **(C) The Lord's Prayer**

**(P) "The body of Christ given for you."**

**"The blood of Christ shed for you."**

(P) We give you thanks, almighty God, that you have refreshed us through the healing power of this gift of life. In your mercy, strengthen us through this gift, in faith toward you and in fervent love toward one another, for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**(P) The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy. The Lord look upon you with favor and give you peace. Amen.**

(P) Be at peace. Christ is with you.

(C) Thanks be to God.

(P)—Pastor

(C)--Congregation

# August 2020

SUN MON TUE WED THU FRI SAT

The office is open Monday-Thursday 9 a.m.-3 p.m. and Friday closed <sup>1</sup>

2 Online Worship <b>11am</b> Café Hope & Communion	3	4 <b>11am</b> Service Recording	5	6	7	8
9 Online Worship <b>11am</b> Café Hope	10	11	12	13 <b>11am</b> Service Recording	14	15
16 Online Worship <b>11am</b> Café Hope	17	18	19	20 <b>11am</b> Service Recording	21	22
23 Online Worship <b>11am</b> Café Hope <b>2pm</b> Forerunner	24	25	26	27 <b>11am</b> Service Recording	28	29
30 Online Worship <b>11am</b> Café Hope <b>2pm</b> Forerunner	31					

## The Voice of Hope Birthday listing



Karl Voss.....	8/7	Andrew Hastings.....	8/26
Pamela Rianda.....	8/9	Jennifer Crawford(Fischer)...	8/27
Helen Hanlon.....	8/13	George Studle.....	8/27
Patricia Kennison.....	8/14	Haley Blundell.....	8/29
Andy Hermansen.....	8/20		
Lyle Johnson.....	8/25		

If you do not want the month and day of your birthday listed in the Voice of Hope, please call or email the church office.

# Save the Date Annual Congregation Meeting And Elections

Sunday September 27th  
At 11:00 a.m.

*Meeting to be held via Zoom and Telephone Conference  
Details will be available in the September issue of The Voice of Hope*

## Hope Prayer list for August

The Klemens family on the death of Bill  
The Lillo family on the death of Ruth  
Karen Reed's family on the death of her brother-in-law Bruce Bushkofshy  
Else welch (recovering from a stroke)  
Erica Grimstvedt ( medical issues with her lungs)  
Doc and Lucie (recovering from a car accident)  
Linda Harvey (recovering from knee surgery)

### Family & Friends of Members

LeVonne Bushkofshy, Sister of Karen Reed (On the death of her husband)  
Anna Williams, Friend of Kris and Jerry Brooks (Breast Cancer)

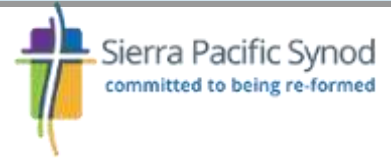


### *Called to Eternal Rest*

Ruth Lillo, wife of Robert Lillo, passed away on June 6, 2020

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

# News from Around the Synod and Beyond



## 2020 Assembly update

July 8, 2020

Dear Members of the Sierra Pacific Synod,

At its meeting on July 8th, the Synod Council voted that the 2020 Synod Assembly will be postponed to 2021. This is in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, the health risks in conducting large public meetings, and the increase in positive COVID cases in our Synod.

This decision comes after much discussion and discernment by the Bishop Election Committee, the Synod Assembly Planning Team, the Executive Committee, and the Synod Council. Those discussions were informed by consultations with church-wide officials and our synod counsel, a letter from the African Descent Pastors of the Sierra Pacific Synod, and guidance from federal, state, and local health officials regarding the pandemic we are living through.

Most importantly, this decision was made after considerable prayer.

The Synod Assembly Planning Team and the Bishop Election Committee explored several options for holding the assembly and concluded that a virtual (e.g., Zoom) assembly poses substantial challenges, especially regarding the ecclesiastical balloting process employed for electing the bishop as well as not having a Spirit-led community process.

According to California Corporations Code section 9220(c), not holding the 2020 Synod Assembly means the Bishop, Secretary, and Synod Council members will continue in office until their successors are elected and qualified.

Thank you for your understanding and prayers – now, more than ever, embrace the Holy Spirit and listen!

*Gail Kiyomura, Vice President*

Sierra Pacific Synod–ELCA

## Your gift to ELCA World Hunger can go twice as far

Thanks to generous friends of ELCA World Hunger, right now all gifts to ELCA World Hunger will be matched – dollar for dollar – until we reach \$101,000.

Your support is urgently needed. As coronavirus disease 2019 continues to tear around the world, people who were already living on the brink of hunger are now vulnerable to starvation. ELCA World Hunger is uniquely positioned to respond. In more than 60 countries, including the United States, we're walking alongside companions and partners as they work to provide food, health care, agricultural training, safe water, livelihoods support and more.

Act now and your donation will go further.



**MT. CROSS MINISTRIES**  
ignite, equip, engage

Fall 2020 Programs

September 10	Deadline to register for our <a href="#">Middle School Faith Formation Program</a>
Oct 3	Fall Fest
Oct 16-18	SPSYC Elementary Retreat*
Nov 6-8	Women's Retreat (postponed from September date due to COVID-19)
Nov 13-15	SPSYC Middle School Retreat*
Dec 4-6	Advent Merrymaking



## 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.

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

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

### OFFICE HOURS AND PROCEDURES

Our office is now open on Monday-Thursday from 9am-3pm. All members and visitors are requested to call or email the office before visiting the church. To comply with California's regulations to prevent the spread of Covid-19, we have implemented new procedures for all visitors to the church building. Everyone must sign in and will be required to submit to a temperature scan before entering the building. Masks must be worn unless a person is in their own private office. We have masks available for those who need one. 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 group is on break over the summer. Men's Breakfast will resume the third Saturday in September.

### FACILITY USE

The Fellowship Christian Church will resume their worship services on August 23rd.

### ONLINE CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

We have expanded our online offering by adding a children's message to our website each week. This can be viewed as part of our sermon, or it is available as a short stand alone message for children. You can find our weekly children's message at: <http://hopelutheransanmateo.org/worship/sermons/>

### Worship Assistants for August

Thank-you to the following individuals for assisting with our online worship in July. As a reminder, we record each week's service on the previous Thursday at 11am.

Date	Readers
Aug 2	Karen Reed
Aug 9	Judy Jeschke
Aug 16	Margo Kannenberg
Aug 23	Skip Dahl
Aug 30	Bill Hroziencik

### 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 Call the office to make arrangements.

Online Link: <https://zoom.us/j/9790847883>  
Meeting ID: 979 084 7883

How to call in from a telephone:  
Dial 669 900 6833 US (San Jose) and when prompted, enter the Meeting ID: 979 084 7883 followed by the pound (#) key.

### SERVICES AND BIBLE STUDIES

If you are unable to watch services or follow Bible studies on the website at home, a computer is available in the office for your use. Please call the church office at (650) 349-0100 to reserve a time for computer use, thus minimizing traffic in the office.

Hope Lutheran Church  
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San Mateo, CA 94403

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August 2020

*The newsletter of Hope Lutheran Church*

# *The Voice of Hope*

**Voice of Hope Deadline for September: Monday August 17th**



## Hope Lutheran Church

650-349-0100

helc@pacbell.net

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

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

**Sunday Worship can be viewed online at**  
[www.hopelutheransanmateo.org/sermons](http://www.hopelutheransanmateo.org/sermons)

