

# HOPE LUTHERAN CHURCH

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Bringing people into a life-changing relationship  
with Jesus Christ



## **ORDER OF WORSHIP March 22, 2020**

### **Brief Order for Confession and Forgiveness (*stand*)**

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

*Silence for reflection and self-examination*

Let us confess our sins to God, our Father.

From depths of grief I cry to you, O Lord. My voice is trying to reach your heart and, break through with cries and sighing. If you keep a record of our sin and hold against us what we have thought and said and done, who then, can stand before you?

Upon this your confession, I proclaim the full and free grace of God to each and every one of you. Your every sin is completely forgiven and you are washed clean in the blood of Jesus Christ, the true and eternal Lamb of God. You now stand in the assembly of the saints of God clothed with the white robe of Jesus' righteousness as your very own. Rejoice and be glad: Jesus is yours, and along with Him, eternal life.

Amen.

## **KYRIE**

In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace from above and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the Church of God, and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise, let us pray to the Lord.

Lord, have mercy.

Help, save, comfort and defend us gracious Lord.

Amen.

## **THE HYMN OF PRAISE**

Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.

Lord God, heavenly king, almighty God and

Father: We worship you, we give you thanks, we

praise you for your glory. Lord Jesus Christ, only Son

of the Father, Lord God, Lamb of God: You take away

the sin of the world; have mercy on us. You are

seated at the right hand of the Father; receive our

prayer. For you alone are the Holy One, you alone

are the Lord, you alone are the Most High, Jesus

Christ with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the

Father. Amen.

## **SCRIPTURE READINGS**

### **Isaiah 60:1-3**

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

## **Psalm 23**

The LORD is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.

## **1 Corinthians 7:29-31**

What I mean, brothers and sisters, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they do not; those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away.

## **GOSPEL (stand)**

The Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew, the 6<sup>th</sup> chapter.  
Glory to You, O Lord.

## **Matthew 6:25-34**

“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life? “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
Praise to You, O Christ

## SERMON

### THIS WORLD IS PASSING AWAY

“Do not become obsessed in the things of this world, for this world in its present form is passing away.”

*1 Corinthians 7:29-31*

The British author C. S. Lewis once suggested that when Jesus performed miracles, he was just giving us a peek behind the stage machinery to see god at work.

When he turned water into wine at the wedding at Cana, he was doing what god is doing all the time. God just uses a vineyard to turn water into grapes and grapes into wine. When Jesus multiplied seven loaves of bread and two fish into enough food to feed thousands of people, he was doing what god does every day. God just uses rivers and lakes and oceans to multiply fish and fields of grain to multiply loaves of bread. Of course, we don't think of vineyards and rivers and lakes and oceans and fields as miracles because we're used to them.

To us they are just everyday parts of what we like to call “nature.”

But make no mistake—what god does every day is as miraculous as what Jesus did at Cana and in the feeding of the multitudes two thousand years ago.

In the same way, when we encounter what we call natural disasters like the current covid-19 virus, we are seeing a dramatic example of what is going on around us all the time. For as Paul wrote, all creation is in bondage to decay as this world passes away. With natural disasters, god is just removing the stage machinery and letting us see the decay firsthand. Wars, rumors of wars, economic convulsions and plagues are going on all around the world.

And now one of them is going on in our own backyard. Now this has caused some Christians to wonder if the day of judgment is at hand. “could this be the end times?” People say. And the answer to this question is “yes.” The end times are indeed here and have been ever since Jesus died on the cross. For when Jesus paid the price for all human sin, he inaugurated the end times. And when he told his disciples about the calamities that would come before the world ended, he promised them that they would take place before their own generation had passed away. And so, they did and so they have—in every generation since that time. There hasn't been a time in history when there were no wars and pestilence and economic turbulence. A first-century Palestinian lived under the constant threat of violence, starvation and disease. A 16<sup>th</sup>-century European lived under the continual threat of war and plagues—a life that has been described as “nasty, brutish and short.” And now we're learning how they felt. And it's a shock, a rude awakening! When you've lived a life of economic stability, of freedom from violence, of access to the world's best healthcare, of the freedom to speak, vote and worship as you please—when you've been pretty much in control of your affairs—it's hard to believe that all that can be suddenly turned upside down.

But it can be and it has. So, what do we do? We know what we can't do and that list is getting longer every day. But what can we do? First of all, we can be assured that the day of judgment isn't here.

The end times are here—and have been for two millennia—but the final judgment has not yet arrived because there will be no doubt about what will happen when that day comes. When Jesus returns the heavens will be filled with his glory and it will be a day of unspeakable joy for his disciples and of unspeakable terror for his enemies. In the meantime, as we await that day, God uses things like wars and plagues and economic disasters—and miracles—to remind us of two things: 1) the consequences of our sin, and, 2) God's life-giving power. He shows us sin's devastating consequences by releasing the four horsemen of the apocalypse to ride over the earth and wreak destruction. Conquest, war, economic chaos and pestilence. With all our 21<sup>st</sup>-century medical knowledge and technology we've been conquered by a tiny microbe. With the greatest arsenal of weapons in history, weapons which could eradicate all life on earth, we're fleeing from an enemy we can't even see. Two weeks ago, we had the most prosperous economy highest stock prices in our history and now the economy and the stock market are in free fall. Pestilence is hovering over our nation while we cower in our homes, hoping it won't strike us. The four horsemen are on the loose and will be until God reins them in. And he will, just as he always does. Meanwhile, we can pray along with the psalmist: *blessed is the people whose God is the Lord, the people he chose for his inheritance. From heaven the Lord looks down upon mankind, he who formed the hearts of them all, he who knows all that they do. The king is not saved by a mighty army, the warrior is not saved by his great strength, a horse is a false hope for victory— it will not deliver anyone by its great strength, the eye of the Lord is upon those who fear him, who hope for his unfailing love to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. Therefore, our soul waits for the Lord, he is our help and our shield, our heart rejoices in him for we trust in his holy word Lord, let your lovingkindness be on us according as we have placed our hopes in you.* During the past five years I've started up bible study groups in some nursing homes. The average age of the residents who attend these bible studies is probably somewhere in the mid-to high eighties. Many of them are physically or mentally compromised and almost all of them deal with chronic pain, loneliness, sickness and recurrent injuries.

They suffer a great deal, yet spiritually speaking they are some of the happiest people I know. They have an enormous zeal for God's word and sacrament and are delighted and grateful to have the opportunity to hear it and talk about how it applies to their lives. And when they talk about death and the promise of heaven, they show a confidence and a joy that amazes me. They sense the glory that awaits them more clearly than we can because there are far fewer worldly things cluttering up their lives. They just pray for their families and their friends and their country and each other and don't worry about the stock market or politics. As far as they're concerned that world is passing away. Having tired of its glories, they cling to the object of their faith and their hope and their love: Jesus Christ. And the smiles on their faces reflect the blessings they know they have. May God give us such faith in his promises and such a clear vision of his glory that we can look beyond the storms of disease and economic chaos that surround us and see the clear blue sky of his healing grace. And may he turn the hearts of our countrymen back to him.

Amen.

**APOSTLE'S CREED (stand)**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, Creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and was born of the virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended into hell. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

## **THE PRAYERS OF THE CHURCH**

Father in heaven, As we labor under fear of this virus, please give us confident hearts, knowing that you are in control of all things and that you will rein in this disease and deliver our country from economic chaos.

We especially pray for the following people:

For Milt Colburn who is receiving physical therapy at Anna Maria. Lift his spirits and strengthen his body so that he can return home soon.

For Glenda Colburn during this time of separation from her husband Milt.

For Wyatt Mullins, that he will receive an accurate and favorable diagnosis of his liver problems and be enabled to live a normal and healthy life.

For all healthcare workers who are exposed to the Covid-19 virus every day, that you would keep them safe and healthy and bless the important work that they do. We pray all these things in the Name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

## **LORD'S PRAYER**

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

## **BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and ☩ give you peace.

Amen.