

Happenings at Hope

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Worship & Study

Sunday School & Bible Class
9:30am

The Divine Service
Sunday 10:30am
Wednesday 7pm

Ladies' Bible Study
9am, the 1st Saturday of
the month

Hope Lutheran Church

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From the Pastor

Greetings, members and friends of Hope Lutheran Church. One thing that makes our way of interacting with each other very different from previous generations is that, using social media, we are able to stay in touch with each other much more easily than used to be the case. For example, even though Marta and the kids and I have been in MN for the past few weeks (I type as I'm on the plane), we have enjoyed being able to keep up with many of the happy events of your lives. And we have also been happy, not in the same way of course, to be able to find out about sad things that some of you have had to go through.

But why would that latter knowledge be something that we or other Christians would be glad to know? How can it be a good thing to learn about the difficulties our fellow believers are facing? Wouldn't it be better to only share our positive experiences, so that we don't come off as complaining to the world?

Even though our natural instinct might be to keep our sadnesses to ourselves, this isn't a healthy thing; not for us as individuals and also not for the greater body of believers of which we are all part. Probably the Bible verse that most quickly comes to mind when thinking

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about this is Galatians 6:2, *Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.*

Of course the law of Christ of which St. Paul writes here is the law of love. As we bear each others' "burdens" in times of joy, we are able to rejoice and give thanks to God for the myriad ways in which God blesses us. And as we bear each other's burdens in times of sadness, we are able to pray for one another; and we have God's sure promise that he hears our prayers, and answers them; *The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working* (James 5:16).



Help to carry one another's burdens.

Another benefit of sharing our griefs is that the simple act of sharing them helps us to not become consumed by them. If the devil had his way, we would always keep everything to ourselves. We would

never advertise, in person nor even on social media, any of the things going on in our lives that make us happy, and by connection make other people happy for us. And we definitely wouldn't share anything for which we need healing and relief.

The longer we keep something that is troubling us bottled up inside of ourselves, the greater effect that thing can have on us. And when it comes to a sin we have committed, for which we naturally and rightly feel guilt, if we hold onto it like that we are giving the devil a much greater grip with which to hold onto us.

All this is why, when we have sinned, we should regularly confess these sins, to God and to the people whom we have wronged, and ask for forgiveness. And this is why, when we have experienced some great sadness in our lives, we shouldn't be afraid of sharing that with others. Instead of being afraid that other people will find out what has happened to you, let your brothers and sisters in Christ pray for and encourage you, so that instead of their unknowing silence adding to your pain, their kind words and actions can help restore you to the peace and gladness that God wants you to have.

May God bless and keep you all. - Pastor Webber

TRUE FREEDOM IN CHRIST!

“It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1)

FREEDOM! --Is it just a word, or way of life? As Americans, we greatly value our freedoms, although so often, many do not fully appreciate or understand them. Today, many express concerns that we are losing our freedoms, as government regulates more and more of our lives.

It is important for all our citizens—but especially for Christians, who have been sanctified in the truth--to be active and educated, not only about the freedoms our country enjoys, but also in doing our part in maintaining those precious freedoms. That's simply being a good steward of our American citizenship, which we have been blessed to possess!

But as wonderful as America's freedoms are, more valuable still is the spiritual freedom we have in Christ Jesus! His freedom brings forgiveness, new life, and life forever!

The chains of sin, that shackled us at the moment of our conception and condemned us to an eternity in hell, were destroyed by Jesus, who replaced our sinful lives with His own sinless life, on Calvary's Cross. His shed blood paid

the price for the whole world's sins and brought forgiveness and salvation to all who believe in Him!

In Christ, we have been freed **FROM** the guilt and condemnation of sin! **In Christ**, we have been

freed **FOR** serving Christ and one another! And **in Christ**, we have the **CERTAINTY** that our eternal salvation has been secured!



But just like our nation's freedoms need to be guarded and maintained, we also have to be careful and diligent about our spiritual freedom.

The apostle Paul calls for a proper understanding of the spiritual freedom we have, in Christ, so that we don't lose it, or take it for granted, but always maintain it, through God's Word and sacrament!

By way of our Lord's life, death, and resurrection, Jesus has lifted off the burden of our sin so that we can be free of its guilt and punishment. He has removed the overbearing pressure of the law from cutting off
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The Words of Institution are the words Christ spoke over the of bread and wine when he celebrated the Lord's Supper for the first time with His disciples at the last supper. As they are heard in the Divine Service at Hope, either spoken or sung, the Words of Institution are always the same. But, if you look through the synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) and also what St. Paul writes in 1 Corinthians, you'll see that the specific words Jesus is quoted as having said are slightly different.

The version of these words that we are most used to hearing in Church are the ones St. Paul records in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25:

The Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me." In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me."

Now compare what Paul writes to what the Evangelists Matthew, Mark, and Luke have recorded:

Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. - Matthew 26:26-28

And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. - Mark 14:22-24

And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them saying, "This is my body which is

given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. - Luke 22:19-20

Do you find this troubling, that the Bible can’t “get right” what are objectively some of the most important verses in the life of the Christian Church? The answer should actually be a resounding no. In fact, you should be comforted by the fact that these four accounts are all slightly different, even though obviously the substance of what Jesus says is the same in each. This is because, when you want to reliably know what happened, you will want the various witnesses of that event to all agree in what they say—but you absolutely don’t want them to all say what they saw in the exact same way. If that happens, then you would be right to assume that, in order to cover up any possible inconsistencies, or even to perpetuate an outright lie, the witnesses came together and agreed on a certain wording.

So the fact that the Holy Spirit inspired the disciples and Paul to record Jesus’ words as they did is an apologetic support of the legitimacy of the institution of the Lord’s supper, not an attack on it. This is also why pastors are not bound by Scripture to use only one of the quotations of Jesus’ words over the

others, although in the Lutheran Church the established liturgical practice has been to use Paul’s account.

But maybe you’re wondering why you even need to hear these words every Divine Service. After all, if Jesus is the one who has established the holy meal of his own true body and blood for all time, then isn’t that original institution enough? Why would we have to repeat his words every time?



The answer to that question lies in what the Lord’s Supper is. It is not a meal which we establish, and around which we gather as an act of unity with each other and devotion to God. The Lord’s Supper is the meal that Jesus has established. No matter when and where the Lord’s Supper is being celebrated by Christians, Jesus is the host, and we are the guests.

And because Jesus is the host at the Lord’s Supper, he and his words are what determine what the Lord’s Supper is, not our intent to receive it. This is why the doctrinal statement of our synod on the Lord’s Supper explains the
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Following:

It is the almighty Word of Christ “which distinguishes it from mere bread and wine and constitutes it a sacrament which is rightly called Christ’s body and blood... ‘When the Word is joined to the external element, it becomes a sacrament’... The Word must make the element a sacrament; otherwise it remains a mere element.” (Large Catechism, paragraph 10)

We hold that “no man’s word or work, be it the merit or the speaking of the minister, be it the eating and drinking or the faith of the communicants, can effect the true presence of the body and blood of the Christ in the Supper. This is to be ascribed only to the almighty power of God and the Word, institution and ordinance of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (FC SD VII 74)

So in the Divine Service, the repeating of Christ’s Words over the bread and wine isn’t a time to zone out or check your phone. Even more than at other places in the service, the time when the Words of Institution are sung or spoken is a time to sit up straight and pay very close attention, because these are the very words through which Jesus is both making himself present with the elements and is personally inviting you to come and partake.

– Pastor Webber

“The Lord’s Supper” is a doctrinal statement adopted by the Evangelical Lutheran Synod in 1997. It can be found in full on the ELS website
<http://els.org/beliefs/doctrinal-statements/the-lords-supper/>

Coffee with Pastor

The Tuesday morning “Coffee with Pastor” that has been on sabbatical for the past couple of months is coming back this month. This is not a formal Bible study, although certainly if anyone wants to talk about religion that’s fine. Instead, the Tuesday morning coffee is simply a time to visit over a cup of coffee and a baked good. Unless otherwise stated, Tuesday morning coffee goes from 9am till about 10am, although if you want to stay for longer certainly no one is going to evict you. This is something that is open to all age groups. If you have any questions, please direct them to Pastor Webber or Audrey Pruett.



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our right standing with God. He has pulled us away from our sinful and selfish ways, and put us on the liberating course of serving Him, that involves honoring His will, growing in our faith, and dealing with others, in Christian love.

We have been freed from sin and freed to serve!

So, you see, **FREEDOM --IN CHRIST--** is more than just a word...it **IS** our way of life!

May His freedom always ring loud and clear, as it reigns in our hearts and lives... and daily proclaims the saving Name of Jesus, for all the world to see and hear!

– ELS Board for Home Outreach

Parish News

Upcoming Events

July

26-30 – ELS Youth Convention in Cincinnati, OH

August

12 – Youth Group Hike and Grill Out (yes...we're trying this again 😊)

27 – Church Golf Outing