

Leading Causes of Life: Not Just Wishful Thinking: Hope

October 18, 2020

Gathering Music

Susan Doherty

ENTERING IN

Greeting

Rev. Gaye

Opening Song

Welcome

Chorus Only

Wel - come, wel - come to___ this place. You're in -

3 vit - ed to come and know God's grace. All are

5 wel - come the love of God to share_____

7 ___ 'cause all of us___ are wel - come here;_____

10 all are wel - come in this___ place._____

Call to Worship

Jane Edwin

Hope nonetheless.

Hope despite.

Hope regardless.

Hope still.

Hope where we had ceased to hope.

Hope amid what threatens hope.

Hope with those who feed our hope.

Hope beyond what we had hoped.

Hope that draws us past our limits.

Hope that defies expectations.

Hope that questions what we have known.

Hope that makes a way where there is none.

Hope that takes us past our fear.

Hope that calls us into life.

Hope that holds us beyond death.

Hope that blesses those to come.

Let us renew our hope by worshipping our God!

~ written by Jan L. Richardson

Passing the Peace

Danny White

We cannot touch just now, *not yet*. We cannot shake, embrace, slap each other on the back, or kiss, *not yet*.

But the peace that passes understanding is not like a virus. It doesn't need to contact to infect, it's like the Spirit and the wind: *it goes wherever it wills, wherever we send it*.

Through webs and nets and wires,
it googles and zooms to everyone whose heart needs peace,
and to every place there is no peace.

And we share it now: the peace of Christ be with you!
And also with you!

Prayer Time/Lord's Prayer

Hurts & Hallelujahs

Rev. Gaye

Call to Prayer

FWS 2197 v.1 (Tune: Be Now My Vision)

Lord of All Hopefulness

1. Lord of all hope - ful - ness, Lord of all joy, whose
 5 trust, ev - er child - like, no care could de - stroy: Be
 9 there at our wak - ing, and give us, we pray, your
 13 bliss in our hearts, Lord, at the break of the day.

Pastoral Prayer/Lord's Prayer

Rev. Gaye

When we fall into the traps of groundless fears, you deliver us.
 When an epidemic of worry threatens to overcome us, you protect us.
 When harmful words are flung at us, you answer our cries for help.
 Gracious God, we worship you.

When our lives crumble, you urge us to buy hope's fields.
 When we are tempted by wealth, you point us to those who have nothing but share all.
 When we are eager to grasp senseless lies, you wrap our hands around God's promises. Servant of the poor, we follow you.

When the world silences our hope, you give us the words to make the good confession of faith.

When we have lost our way and can no longer endure the emptiness of our lives, you satisfy us from the abundance of God's grace and joy.
 Sheltering Spirit, we seek your peace.

God in Community, Holy in One, our Refuge, our Trust, our Hope, we lift our prayer to you as Jesus has taught us, saying,

Our Father . . .

~ written by Thom Shuman

LISTENING, LEARNING, LOVING

Sharing the Word(s)

Excerpt from “Leading Causes of Life”

Jan Hinkley

Hope is the cause that shows up in every small group we’ve ever gathered to talk about life. It is the one with the richest library of documentation in every possible discipline. Hope is a theological lodestone attracting the most profound of every generation of every faith.

Of all the five Leading Causes of Life, only one requires an adjective if we are to discern its true meaning. That cause is *hope*. And the adjective is “informed.” Informed hope is a leading cause of life.

Wishful thinking will not suffice. Optimism devoid of reality can bring us both to denial and despair. But informed hope is grounded in life itself. It is not an event. It is a process. It is not afraid of discouraging facts. It knows that magical thinking is often an escape from life whereas informed hope is of life. Informed hope has a way of saying, “Yes, these untoward events have happened, and there is no way to turn back time. But you still have a life to live. Live it!”

Times of frightful transition, such as our own, call out those who steal the hopes of some in order to claim it for themselves. They use their agency to steal rather than bless, which at the very least undermines the life of the whole.

Deitrich Bonhoeffer, writing from a Nazi prison, stared directly into the cold-blooded lunacy of evil. He died days before WWII ended in one of Hitler’s final acts of meaningless vengeance, so we have no idea what he would have said as an old man. As

a young one Bonhoeffer built that most wonderful of all human creations: a community of seekers who gathered every day to read Scripture and talk about what it called on them to do in the real world.

It was a seminary, as despised by the German church as it was by the government, because it showed that there was a way other than death and fear. The community of prayer brought them into deep and compelling connection to each other, in which they could imagine, as clearly as a memory, the kind of world God was creating out of the broken and bent pieces of the world all around them. They were most fully alive dancing in the jaws of death.

And who is to say they were naïve?

A generation after they died, their words powered others through the darkest days of South African apartheid to see the most progressive constitution on the planet emerge peacefully.

Two generations later, our lives draw life from the ones they laid down. We are more coherent, and our agency finds encouragement, from their sacrifice. We are blessed and want to bless others with similar courage and wisdom. They hoped and we are linked in their web of blessing to act.

Judges 7:2-4,8,16-22 (Common English Bible)

Maribeth Peiniger

² The LORD said to Gideon: “You have too many people on your side. If I were to hand Midian over to them, the Israelites might claim credit for themselves rather than for me, thinking, ‘We saved ourselves.’”

³ So now, announce in the people’s hearing, ‘Anyone who is afraid or unsteady may return home from Gideon’s mountain.’” At this, twenty-two thousand people went home, and ten thousand were left.

⁸ So the people gathered their supplies and trumpets, and Gideon sent all the Israelites home, but kept the three hundred.

¹⁶ He divided the three hundred men into three units and equipped every man with a trumpet and an empty jar, with a torch inside each jar. ¹⁷ “Now watch me,” he ordered them, “and do what I do. When I get to the outpost of the camp, do just what I do. ¹⁸ When I blow the trumpet, along with all who are with me, then you blow the trumpets, all of you surrounding the whole camp. And then shout, ‘For the LORD and for Gideon!’”

¹⁹ Gideon and one hundred of his men moved to the outpost of the camp at the middle watch of the night, when they had just changed the guards. Then they blew the trumpets and smashed the jars that were in their hands. ²⁰ So the three units blew their trumpets and broke their jars, holding the torches with their left hands and blowing the trumpets in their right hands.

And they called out, “A sword for the LORD and for Gideon!”

²¹ Each man stood fast in his position around the camp, and the entire camp took off running, shouting, and fleeing.

²² When the three hundred trumpets sounded, the LORD turned the swords of fellow soldiers against each other throughout the whole camp. The camp fled as far as Beth-shittah toward Zererah, to the border of Abel-meholah, beside Tabbath.

Message for Our Day

Candace Woods, M.Div MID

Our Tithes and Offerings

Rev. Glenn

God of Power and Glory, we come to worship this morning, offering our gifts and praying for your presence in a world that is hurting and divided. Much of what we see is chaos, confusion, and anxiety – a world that desperately needs to glimpse your presence and receive your hope.

More than just our gifts of money, we pray our lives might be a window into your hope, love, and compassion.

We pray your light might shine through us to the world. Amen..

Offertory

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SENDING FORTH

Announcements

Rev Gaye

Benediction

Candace Woods, MDiv MID

Music for Scattering

Stevie Astley

Down By the Riverside

(Choose Life Version)

The musical score is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a common time signature (C). The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. Chords are indicated by letters above the staff. The lyrics are written below the staff.

1 **D** **D**
 Gon-na live life like Je - sus, — Down by the riv-er - side,

5 **A7** **D**
 Down by the riv-er - side, down by the riv-er - side. Gon-na

9 **D** **D**
 live life like Je - sus, — Down by the riv-er - side, and

13 **A7** **D** **A7** **D**
 stud - y death no more!

16 **D7** **G** **D**
 I ain't gon-na stud-y death no more, ain't gon-na stud-y death no

20 **A7** **G** **A** **D**
 more, Ain't gon-na stud - y death no more.

24 **D7** **G** **D**
 I ain't gon-na stud-y death no more, ain't gon-na stud-y death no

28 **A7** **D** **A7** **D**
 more, Ain't gon-na stud - y death no more!