



# HOPE NOTES

## September 2020

### Hope Lutheran Church of Forest Hills

*Serving the Community  
with Love*

*Hope is a congregation of the  
Evangelical Lutheran Church  
in America*

Worship Sundays 11:15 am

Taize Prayer Service 7:00 pm  
first Friday of every month  
(except June, July & August)

#### P.L.U.M. Pastoral Team

Rev. John Gropp - 412-680-7867  
Rev. Brenda Henry - 412-390-8005  
Rev. Dr. Paul Koch - 773-848-1470  
Pastor Susan Devine - 412-496-4889  
Vicar Mandy Gilberti - 814-241-8150

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*Hopeforesthills@aol.com  
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Office Hours:  
Mon.-Thurs. - 9 a.m.-noon  
Susan Lescinsky, Secretary

#### Church Council:

David Hauser, President and  
Assistant Treasurer  
Kristina Fennell, Vice President  
Lynda Joyce, Secretary  
Bev Koch, Treasurer  
Kathie Nelson, Member  
Janet Moberg, Member  
Pam Hall, Member  
Barb Kochuba, Member  
Jane Cushion, Member

Dear Partners in Ministry,

It might be hard to believe but since July 26th we have walked through most of Paul's second letter to the Corinthians. There are four known letters from Paul to the people of Corinth, called the Corinthians. Some of the content of these letters has been lost to us and the remainder of what is left was used to create what we know as 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians was written less than a year after the documents used to create 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians. It was during Paul's second ministry journey that he visited the city of Corinth.

Corinth was a big sea port; it was a busy place full of trade and business was successful. The city itself was a Roman colony that was immersed in Greek tradition. Part of the Greek tradition was the ongoing pagan worship of the goddess Athena; another part was the sexual immorality that went on openly in worship spaces. Early Christians found it very difficult to communicate the love of Christ within the city because of these popular practices. There were divisions in families and friendships could not endure the tension that tugged between the old practices and the potential of the new way of Jesus. Paul openly speaks that suffering for Christ will be their "new normal".

The lectionary focused on Consolation, Forgiveness, Treasure in Clay Jars, Walk by Faith not Sight, Reconciliation, and Generosity. My attempt is to provide a "cliff-notes" version of what we have covered in 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians. First is Consolation. God does console us, but sometimes we don't experience it in the way that we believe it should happen. We want everything to be just so; we want all of our problems to just go away. But we really shouldn't sit still and let God do all of the heavy lifting for us. We need to realize that in getting consolation from God provides us with strength, encouragement and hope. We are never alone in our suffering. Christ suffers along with us. We cannot depend solely on ourselves to live our lives, we have to yoke up with God. Second was Forgiveness. We are not just supposed to extend forgiveness to others three times, or even seven times. We are supposed to forgive each other in an ongoing way. The best posture to have is when we are authentic about who we are and accountable for all we do. It sounds much easier on paper than it really is. God is totally aware of this and walks with us as we try to forgive others as often as we can. Third was Treasure in Clay Jars. We are the clay jars, we are ordinary on the outside but extraordinary on the inside. We are fragile jars of clay, therefore we need to be careful to make sure that we affect everyone else in a positive way. We are to be mindful of the attention we give to earthly money, possessions, and power. Our focus should be more on God. Fourth was Walk by Faith, not by Sight. We are reminded again that we are human beings with body and soul. Our

bodies waste away in front of the mirror, but our soul never wastes away. The soul is nourished by the Word of God as we read scripture, as we worship together, and when we kneel in prayer. Our daily relationship with God is important and should take priority in our lives. Fifth was Reconciliation. We are brand new people on the inside when we have been forgiven; the relationship with God is stronger, that old sin is done and forgotten. We can think of God as the “quicker picker upper”, our sins are blotted out and thrown away in the garbage. Finally, Generosity. As I think of the year plus that I have spent with you here at PLUM, I recognize you as generous people. Before the days of Covid’s limitations, when I walked into all of your worship spaces, I knew that if I needed anything you would rush to provide it for me. You are generous within your communities by providing food, diapers and clothes to those in need. You are generous with your time, talents, and treasures. I have witnessed some wonderful music, ideas, and a willingness to stay in a meeting even though it was running late.

Those six weeks have seemed to fly by, and here we are still wearing masks and keeping our distance. As bad as all of this can sometimes feel, there are truly times where life seems to be going along in a positive way. Our worship spaces are beginning to reopen. We can greet each other once again—even if it is from six feet away. We are once again communing with wine AND bread. The ZOOM service is still well attended and I have heard that people enjoy

seeing familiar folks and meeting new folks. The daily 3pm meet up on ZOOM has turned out to be not only a place to hang out, but a place of love and support for the other! As we begin our walk toward the end of summer, let’s just pause and take a moment to take in all that we have experienced through the past few months. A deep breath is always a good way to refresh our body and soul!

God’s continued blessings on each and every one of you!  
Vicar Mandy

## ***PLUM Discussion Series***

~ resumes on September 15 ~

...will be on hiatus for 3 weeks, August 23 through September 12. Studies will resume on September 15 and will be Tuesdays at 1pm and Thursdays at 7pm via zoom. As time gets closer, please see the PLUM website ([plumofpa.com](http://plumofpa.com)) for details.

*A huge shout out to Pastor Sue who performed her first wedding on July 17<sup>th</sup>!! She did a fantastic job! We could not thank her enough for her flexibility and working with us so closely during these crazy times.*

*Thank you Pastor Sue, for being a part of our special day.*

*-Ryan and Misty (Mudryk) Kelley*

## **Continued Support Needed**

*Offerings through the first half of the year are down 20% from last year, and although we haven't been having services in the Sanctuary until recently, we still have pretty much the same regular expenses as last year. So please remember that we still need your offerings to meet our obligations!*

*We are especially grateful for those who have been able to continue sending or dropping off their donations. Your support of Hope's ongoing ministry is greatly appreciated and encouraged.*

*Thank you again!*



**SEPTEMBER  
Pocket Change**

**Pantry Network  
of Eastern Suburbs**