



LUMUNOS

FAITH & LIGHT FOR THE JOURNEY

And Now Hope

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Doug Wysockey-Johnson

Hope

And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love

I Corinthians 13:13

It is the “And now...” that is so striking this time around. I have heard this verse a thousand times, both inside and outside of the church—at weddings and on greeting cards and everywhere in-between. But I never noticed the “And now” part. **Now** is the time for faith. **Now** is the time for hope. **Now** is the time for love. That may or may not be what the Apostle Paul meant when writing those words, but at Lumunos we are just assuming that Paul is addressing us today. So these will be our newsletter themes this year. Not necessarily in that order, since we often do things a bit backwards here at Lumunos. We will start this issue with hope, move to faith in the fall, and finish the year with love. Now is the time for hope, faith and love at Lumunos.

HOPE FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Scott Hammond tells the story of a woman lost in the wilderness on a cold winter night.¹ As it became apparent that

she was going to be spending the night in the frigid wilderness, the woman knew she needed something to occupy her mind. So she began planning a family reunion. Later she reported that the hope of that family reunion helped keep her alive.

That is one of the ways that hope works—it wells up from some mysterious place within us, and helps us to cope with whatever wilderness we find ourselves in. Hope is an internal reality that somehow helps us deal with whatever craziness is going on around us. As the Czech poet and political leader Vaclav Havel wrote: *“Hope is ... an orientation of the spirit, an orientation of the heart; it transcends the world that is immediately experienced, and is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons. Hope, in this deep and powerful sense, is not the same as joy that things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but, rather, an ability to work for something because it is good, not because it stands a chance to succeed.”²*

Hope starts in some place deep within us and emanates outward, helping us cope with whatever outward reality might be ours to face.

HOPE FROM OUTSIDE IN

But hope goes both ways. Sometimes hope is given to us from the outside. I see this most strongly in two places: our relationships, and the natural world.

There have been times when I had little hope inside. The only thing I could do was to ask the same question that Job asked in the midst of his pain: *“Who will see my hope?”* (Job 17:15) I remember a time in my young professional life when I felt my world was crumbling around me—I was lonely, and not sure at all I had made the right vocational choice. Thankfully I had a mentor I could turn to—he welcomed me into his family. Without trying to fix or solve the internal pain, he hoped for me.

Other times it is simply people doing good in the world that can give me hope. And it can come in the craziest, most mundane places. The other day I was peddling away furiously on an exercise bike, in a mood as gray and dark as the sky outside. I was filled with anger and frustration, a place not at all hopeful.

But ESPN was on the TV, and the interview was with a sportscaster named Ernie Johnson who has just published a book called *Unscripted: The Unpredictable Moments That Make Life Extraordinary*. The interview had very little to do with basketball, stats or the upcoming NBA playoffs. Instead he spoke about the special needs child he and his wife adopted from Romania, their other children, and dealing with cancer. He was thoughtful and kind. I got off the bike more hopeful than when I started, and grateful for the way other people create hope for us when we cannot muster it ourselves.

Hope also comes from the outside in through the natural world. At the moment I am thinking specifically of light. By the time you read this, we will be well into spring and Daylight Savings Time. So I want to remind you of how good it felt back in March when we got that extra hour of daylight. Remember those first few afternoons when it was 6PM and still light? Remember how that feels? And how even now the extra light fills and lengthens our days as we are moving towards the Summer Solstice. Light makes such a difference. Amongst all the signs and images of hope (spring, flowers growing out of cracks in the sidewalks, “the thing with feathers,” etc.), light may be my favorite.

“LUMUNARIES”

Sometimes people and light come together to provide hope in abundance. This year we add a column to our newsletter called *Lumunaries*. In this column we will be featuring some of the people who have blessed, and continue to bless Lumunos with their presence. Living or now deceased, these are people who have brought light and hope to Lumunos and the world.

May the light bring you hope this season. And may you be a source of light and hope to others.

¹ Scott C. Hammond, *Lessons of the Lost: Finding Hope and Resilience in Work, Life, and the Wilderness*, published by iUniverse.

² Vaclav Havel, from *Disturbing the Peace: A Conversation with Karel Huizdala* as quoted in Rebecca Solnit’s *“Hope in the Dark: Untold Histories, Wild Possibilities”*

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Hope Growing

Peter Hawkinson



The other day I sat with an aged saint on a brisk and sunny spring afternoon. Ken, at 99, lives with intermediate level of nursing care as he moves between his bed and his easy chair in his studio apartment. His eyesight is almost gone, so dim now that he can no longer peruse his daily paper, his favorite hobby. His ears do for him just as poorly. Ethel, his beloved, who filled his life with joy, died ten years ago. He talked about his childhood, and what it was like to grow up during the great depression. Sharp as a tack still, he asked me to update him on the adventures of my kids. When I asked him how at this point in his life he was feeling, Ken said, "More than anything else, hopeful." I thought he might say sad, or reflective, or even grateful...but hopeful? I asked him why he felt that way, and he said, "because God has been good to me, and God will be good to me." We prayed together – I for him, and he for me, and driving home, mesmerized still by his answer, I prayed with longing to grow into such a faith.

Ken's good sermon has me still wondering about how hope grows.

Growing older, I've got a bone to pick with St. Paul. It seems that as the years go by hope grows, threatening even to rival love. And this is mystifying, because now in my mid-fifties I see more clearly that this life I have is fleeting, that time is on the move. Aches and pains grow. Both chronic and acute illnesses now are having their day. Time is spent saying farewell to children and parents. Many sorrows of beloved friends fill up my heart. Days and nights find me reflecting on memories that lead to nostalgia. Yet, despite all these things, hope grows in me. Like so many spiritual things, it's nonsensical, and I ask myself, what gives? How can it be?

I'm drawn to the writing of the essayist, E.B. White, who some years ago watched his wife, Katherine, planning the planting of bulbs in her garden in the last autumn of her

life, and wrote: "...There was something comical yet touching in her bedraggled appearance...the small hunched over figure, her studied absorption in the implausible notion that there would be yet another spring, oblivious to the ending of her own days which she knew perfectly well was near at hand, sitting there with her detailed chart under those dark skies in dying October, calmly plotting the resurrection."

There is this strange and wonderful, even defiant hope that grows in those whose life of faith is rooted in the Easter news of resurrection. Hope that grows doesn't deny life's aches and pains and sorrows and losses, but grows in and through them, anticipating the wonder of all that's yet to be. And this growing hope blesses us on our way, even in life's most challenging days. Plotting the resurrection, we live with hope, whatever else is going on.

Former Faith at Work/Lumunos director Karl Olsson said this: "Because of the character of God as revealed in Jesus, we have hope that both history and what lies beyond it will be stamped by the character of God. Hence even when we mourn about our own mortality or the frailty of the institutions and societies of which we are a part, we do not sorrow as those who have no hope."

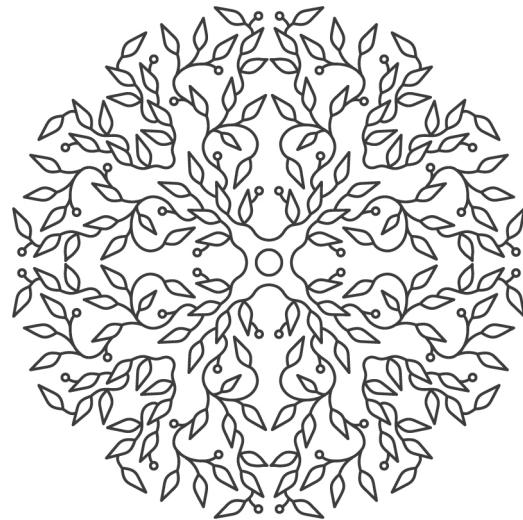
Hope grows! On the mantle over the fireplace in a friend's home chiseled into a stone are the words of the 14th century mystic Julian of Norwich: "All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well." Not because all has been or all necessarily is, not at all! But all shall be. The God of all things, who has loved us once and for all in Christ Jesus, promises us this.

Wherever life finds you just now, may you find that your hope is growing.

Peter Hawkinson, Senior Pastor at the Winnetka Covenant Church in Wilmette, IL, is a fundamentally hopeful person who believes the days ahead will be full of new opportunities to engage the life of discipleship and the call to reach out with love of Christ in our community.

The Small Work in the Great Work

by Rev. Victoria Safford



I am interested in what Seamus Heaney calls the meeting point of hope and history, where what has happened is met by what we make of it. What has happened is met midstream by people who are – among the multitude of things we are – spiritual beings and all that that implies of creativity, imagination, crazy wisdom, ancient wisdom, passionate compassion, selfless courage, and radical reverence for life. And love – for one another absolutely, and that love that rises out of us, for something larger than ourselves, call it what you will. I am interested in the place, the places, where history is met by the hope of the human soul, life's longing for itself. I am interested in hope on this side of the grave – for me there is no other kind – and in that tidal wave of justice that could rise up if only we would let it.

I have a friend who traffics in words. She is a psychiatrist in the health clinic at a prestigious women's college. We were sitting once not long after a student she had counseled, committed suicide in the dormitory. My friend, the doctor, the healer, held the loss very closely in those first few days, not unprofessionally, but deeply, fully – as you or I would have, had this been someone in our care.

At one point (with tears streaming down her face), she looked up in defiance and spoke explicitly of her vocation, as if out of the ashes of that day she were renewing a vow or making a new covenant. She spoke explicitly of her vocation, and of yours and mine. She said, "You know I cannot save them. I am not here to save anybody or to save the world. All I can do – what I am called to do – is to plant myself at the gates

of hope. Sometimes they come in. Sometimes they walk by. But I stand there every day and I call out till my lungs are sore with calling, and beckon and urge them in toward beautiful life and love."

By grace, by her will, she is planted "at the gates of hope," regardless. There's something for all of us there, I think. Whatever our vocation, we stand, beckoning and calling, singing and shouting, planted at the gates of hope. This world and our people are beautiful and broken, and we are called to raise that up – to bear witness to the possibility of living with the dignity, bravery, and gladness that befits a human being. That may be what it is to "live our mission."

Religious spiritual leader Matthew Fox writes of "the small work in the Great Work," the place of your little life and love, and earnest effort as a solitary person within the larger Life and larger Love that some call Holy, some call God, some call History, and others call simply larger than themselves. Like everybody else, we are doing small work within the Great Work of creation, and thus do we aid it and abet it in unfolding. We stand where we will stand, on little plots of ground, where we are maybe "called" to stand – in our congregations, classrooms, offices, factories, in fields of lettuces and apricots, in hospitals, in prisons (on both sides, at various times, of the gates), in streets, in community groups. And it is sacred ground if we would honor it.

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The Gates of Hope

Victoria Safford

Our mission is to plant ourselves at the gates of Hope

Not the prudent gates of Optimism,
Which are somewhat narrower.

Not the stalwart, boring gates of Common Sense;
Nor the strident gates of Self-Righteousness,
Which creak on shrill and angry hinges
(People cannot hear us there; they cannot pass through)

Nor the cheerful, flimsy garden gate of

"Everything is gonna'be all right."

Nor the different, sometimes lonely place,

The place of truth-telling,

About your own soul first of all and its condition.

The place of resistance and defiance,

The piece of ground from which you see the world

Both as it is and as it could be

As it will be;

The place from which you glimpse not only struggle,

But the joy of the struggle.

And we stand there, beckoning and calling,

Telling people what we are seeing



LOAVES & FISHES

Remember or honor those you love with a special gift to Lumunos in their name.

In Honor of Dick Broholm

John & Amy Anderson

In Honor of Marjory Bankson

Annemarie Evans

In Honor of Tiffany Montavon

Carter Echols
& Bill Johnson

In Memory of Bill Curtis

Fran Curtis

In Honor of Tom Pappas

& Laurel Van Ham
Carolyn Harp

In Memory of Phyllis D. Reimer

Cecil Reimer

In Memory of Diane McAllister

Cynthia Poole

In Memory of Nancy Boyle

David Childs

In Honor of Pastor Rev. Karen Nachtigall

Deborah Geiger

In Memory of Wilber "Joe" Cole

Dorothy Cole

In Memory of Jackie Daley

Elizabeth Nolen

In Memory of Mary Jane Lentz

Bonnie Falla
Esther Mefford

In Memory of Paul Everett

& Florence Pert
Maggie Everett

In Honor of Doug Wysockey-Johnson

Fred & Marlene Shilling

In Honor of God's Many Blessings

Gloria Janka

In Memory of Grace & Paul Lentz/

Mary Jane Schneider Lentz
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In Memory of Josie Dunbar

Jean Dunbar

In Honor of Pastor Judy Howard Peterson

Owen & Judy Peterson

In Memory of Dave & Pat Minard

Linda Lively

In Memory of Suzy Beeton Herring

Malcolm B. Herring

In Memory of Florence Pert

Michael & Mary Murray

In Memory of Mac & Nancy Boyle

Rev. & Mrs. John Novikoff, Sr.

In Memory of Mary Cosby

Rev. Dr. Mary Mason

In Memory of Margaret R. Zinn

Rebecca & Wayne Liskey

In Memory of Dr. & Mrs. Larry L. Hipp

Anthony Hipp

In Memory of Adaline Bjorkman

The Bjorkman Foundation

In Honor of Wini White

Carol Schmidt

In Honor of David Thorpe

Peter & Rene Nelson

In Honor of Dan Davis & Suzanne Adele Schmidt

William & Sandra Renner

In Memory of Elsie Anderson

William Anderson

God is a Surprise

Through the years, Lumunos/Faith-at-Work has remained vibrant in an ever-changing world because of the community of people who have participated in our work. We have been blessed by these “Lumunaries” in many different ways. In this new column we will celebrate the people who have been an embodiment of the mission of Lumunos. Some of the people we will highlight have passed on; others remain energetic members of our community. Either way, their light remains with us.

It is no surprise that Nancy Boyle was one of the first people we thought of as a Lumunary. Nan was a long time board member (and Board Chair) and retreat leader from Columbia, South Carolina. She died in 2010. The following is an excerpt from her funeral homily, preached by Doug Wysockey-Johnson.

IN A NUTSHELL, NANCY'S THEOLOGY WAS THIS:

1. God is always More
2. Nothing is Wasted
3. God is a Surprise

These are her words. I heard her say them often at Faith-At-Work board meetings and at the St. Simon's annual conference. It wasn't until this past week, as I went through years of her relational bible studies, that I saw how prevalent this theology was in her life. In fact, she had this theology in Trinitarian form:

1. God is Always More—God the Creator
2. Nothing is Wasted—The resurrection life of Jesus
3. God is a Surprise—Holy Spirit, unpredictable and surprising

GOD IS ALWAYS MORE

God is Always More was most apparent to Nancy at Pawley's Island in South Carolina, the beloved vacation home of Nan and Mac. I think Nan's understanding of the infinite creativeness of God was formed by years and years of staring at the ocean from the lookout on the beach. God is always more could also be seen in the small and vulnerable forms of creation.

In fact, I have a t-shirt somewhere in my house for S.C.U.T.E. which is a turtle protection organization on Pawley's Island. Nan cared passionately about the newly hatched turtles. She also loved

talking to my wife Kathryn about what the flowers in her yard were doing, and other intricacies of creation. In so many ways Pawley's Island embedded in Nan the notion of an infinitely creative and continually creating God.

Nancy also found her “God is always more” theology in the pages of scripture. She loved the book of Isaiah almost as much as the gospel of John. She was drawn to passages like Isaiah 43:17:

I am about to do a new thing:

Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

And Isaiah 54:

Enlarge the site of your tent,

And let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out;

Do not hold back; lengthen your cords

And strengthen your stakes

It is not hard to see the “God is always more” theology theme that Nancy found in the pages of scripture. The tent could be enlarged. Stretch out the curtains. Read new theology. What was the new book from Barbara Brown Taylor or Marcus Borg? What new forms was the church taking? How could Faith at Work do things differently to reach new people? The thing that drove these questions was God is always more.

NOTHING IS WASTED

Here was Nan's theology of suffering. This was how Nan made sense of the harder things in life, both her own challenges, and others. As usual, her own life bore this out. She struggled with a learning disability throughout her life. Here Nan mentions it in an article she wrote about her call to teach:

My art teacher had quickly discovered that I could not draw. But, giving me a gift that has impacted my entire life, she asked me to teach the color wheel to the class. I did, and did it so well that she asked me to teach it to all her art classes! What a boost for a child that not only could not draw or spell and but had a tendency to reverse numbers. (In later years we called it a learning disability.)

These challenging experiences led Nancy into her calling as a teacher, specializing in children with learning disabilities. Nothing is wasted, not even the hard experiences.

More recently, Nancy wrestled with the difference between being healed and being well. As was her way, she used writing to process her feelings. In the last article she wrote for Lumunos, she reflected on John 5. In this passage there is a lame man who had been lying by a pool for 38 years. I'm sure Nancy connected with this story in part because she couldn't walk the last few years of her life either. Jesus comes and asks the lame man a question: Do you want to be made well?

Nancy writes in exclamation points in the article: OF COURSE!! OF COURSE I DO!! (I have no doubt that Nan is being as direct with Jesus now as she was with all of us. In fact, I imagine her tracking down Jesus in heaven and saying, “Well look

at that Jesus, its beer thirty. Let's sit down and talk. I have some things I need to discuss with you, starting with that whole lame thing I had to go through the past few years. What was that all about?")

For Nancy and for us, we don't always get healing. Sometimes the ability to walk doesn't return. Sometimes the tumor doesn't go away. Our scars remain. There is pain. What is offered, and what Nancy chose, was wellness. She wrote: *Choosing to be well is our call; what follows are opportunities for loving others as we get the spotlight off of ourselves.*

Through the death and resurrection of Jesus, nothing is wasted.

GOD IS A SURPRISE

God is a surprise because the Holy Spirit blows where it will and does all sorts of things that we can't expect. All this is related. God is a surprise because God is always more, always doing a new thing. God is a surprise because nothing is wasted...even suffering and death can be redeemed.

Nancy called this her "Plan B theology," something she worked on with her good friend Libby Woodward. Libby taught her this song:

Roll it over, put it down,
Take a step back and you'll see.
Not to worry, it's all right,
ALL OF LIFE IS PLAN B'

Nan told me, "I have been singing it and living it ever since."

She wrote about this idea in an article for Faith-at-Work Magazine. The setting is Pawley's Island:

I sat on the dock in the salt marsh. The gulls performed a magnificent water ballet against the backdrop of a glorious sunset. Behind me was the beach house of my youthful dreams: old, and spacious. Childhood memories flooded my mind: crabbing and fishing on a dock very near this one, long walks on the beach, endless hours riding waves in the ocean. Memories mingled with dreams and plans for my adult future: a beach house, a loving husband, lots of children, adequate money and me, mature at last, presiding over the whole scene with grace.

I sat on the dock in the afterglow alone. Nearly all the dreams had come true: husband, children, house. But where was I — the graceful serene lady loved and cared for by all? My husband was deeply involved in his work with no time for vacation. The four really wonderful children were living their own lives as we had encouraged them to do. They visited often, being with me in beautiful ways and loving the beach, but it was never quite enough. The childhood dream translated into the here and now left me dissatisfied — wanting perfection.

I sat on the dock in the gathering dusk, strangely calm and deeply saddened until I knew what it was. My loving heavenly Father seemed very close. (I have always felt especially close to him here). But his love felt different: tough, strong and strangely stern. I had always imagined his goal for me was this graceful maturity I sought.

"Dear Lord, what is it? What do I need to learn?" I asked,

"Aloneness, acceptance of yourself and others, joy in the present moments that I give you," came the answer.

"Yes, that's what I want. But what's blocking all this? I've been struggling with it for years."

A crushing but deep truthful insight cut across my heart. The dreams, when they don't fit with the reality, are the barrier. The dreams must be buried. The here and now accepted and the future faced with faith.

I sat on the dock under the darkening star-filled sky and buried my little girl dreams. I will be responsible for my own happiness and not expect it to be provided by others. I will enjoy my solitude as a gift. I will accept others in their process wherever they are on life's journey.

I knew that a death had occurred. "Except a seed fall to the ground and die," Jesus said, "it remains alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (John 12:24-25).

The Christian life is death and resurrection. I wondered, What will my resurrection body be like? How will it feel? Mature?

Well, my new body was exactly what was needed to prepare me for the events that took place after this experience on the dock. A walk through intense pain, a new career. In fact, a whole new way of life. The real resurrection, however, has been the rebirth inside of me of a beautiful little girl. No longer blocked and frustrated by childish dreams of perfection, I can play and celebrate in a way I never could before.

I don't know if resurrection is Plan B, D or Q. I do trust that Nancy is fully living into the mystery of resurrection now. Because God is more, she is experiencing more. Because nothing is wasted, her life and legacy here with us will continue to bear fruit in our lives. Because God is a surprise, even this painful grief and loss we feel is going to lead us to something new.

Nancy is no longer blocked and frustrated by childish dreams of perfection. Nancy is no longer stuck in a wheel chair, and limited by what her body wouldn't let her do these last few years. Nancy can play and celebrate in a way she never could before. (And for a partier like Nancy, that is saying something.)

She is free!

Thanks be to God.



If you would like to nominate a person to be featured as one of our Lumunaries, contact Doug Wysockey-Johnson at doug@lumunos.org



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"Hope is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul."

Emily Dickinson



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