Today’s Reading: Hebrews 11:1

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.”

This Sunday at Church of the Servant we are launching into a Six-Week Sermon series on the topic of hope. The world we experience in our day-to-day lives can work to shake our confidence in ourselves, and if we are not properly grounded, potentially in God as well. To answer this challenge we, as disciples of Jesus Christ, must have a clear understanding of who we are as God’s children, and how God is working in and around us to overcome the threats we face. All this is based on the sure and certain truth that God is capable of bringing to completion the good work he has begun in each of us. His character provides the basis for our hope!

“The sense that things are not as they should be is universal. The world is marked by death, violence, suffering, and injustice, and lives by tragedy, hurt, and pain. There is also the vague but real unease that we are not as we should be. Even though our visions of a perfect world or a moral person may be flawed, we nonetheless have them.

The Gospel message brings with it both a diagnosis of the problem and a promised cure. We find that what we took to be normal life is instead to find ourselves to be in the grip of a disease called sin. The remedy is God’s love for us in Jesus Christ.”

Henry H Knight III, Consider Wesley: A Theology of Hope
Christian Hope:

Biblical and Christian hope does not mean living in the clouds, dreaming of a better life. It is not merely a projection of what we would like to be or do. It leads us to discover seeds of a new world already present today, because of the identity of our God, because of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This hope is, in addition, a source of energy to live differently, not according to the values of a society based on the thirst for possession and competition. In the Bible, the divine promise does not ask us to sit down and wait passively for it to come about, as if by magic.

Before speaking to Abraham about the fullness of life offered to him, God says, “Leave your country and your home for the land I will show you.” (Gen. 12:1) To enter into God’s promise, Abraham is called to make of his life a pilgrimage, to undergo a new beginning.

Similarly, the good news of the resurrection is not a way of taking our minds off the tasks of life here and now, but a call to set out on the road. “Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking up to heaven” ...Go into the entire world and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ to the whole creation... You will be my witnesses to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 2:22; Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8

Christian Hope: A Letter from Taize 2003/3

Further Discussion and Thoughts...

- What are the things in your life that give you hope?
  - How are your hopes dependant upon your circumstances? As your environment and situation change, do your hopes shift with them? If so, how?
- The circumstances of our lives can be comfortable, they can be difficult, they can be unexpectedly joyous, or they can be tragic—our day-to-day situation is often beyond our control.
  - Do you believe the experience of positive experiences indicate God’s favor toward you or others, and conversely, do difficult circumstances signal God’s displeasure?
  - When faced with significant adversity, where do you turn to find stability and hope?
- Laura Boal writes, “When tough times come, we need to look past the “facts” of our situation. Instead we must focus on the truth of who God is and who we are in him.
  - How does knowing God’s story as revealed in Scripture change the way you think about your circumstances?
  - What would it mean for you to ground your hopes in God’s character?

NEXT WEEK AT CHURCH OF THE SERVANT

“A Living Hope”

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! By his great mercy he has given us a new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and kept in heaven for you, who are being protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 1 Peter 1:3-5