

That's The Spirit!

Rev. Alan Field

New Spirit Lutheran Church

January 2018

Our faith is in Jesus.

Our hope is in grace.

Our strength is in love.

Dear Partners on the Trail....

Are you ready? Have you fastened your seat belts and locked your tray-table in its upright and locked position? Every year, it seems like we need to hear those words from our pilot all over again. The essence of those words: comfort and assurance.

Does anyone feel a need for words of comfort and assurance after finishing 2017? I surely do. The state of our world and nation has grown caustic. Fear is spouted by politicians, while they pad the coffers of the ultra-wealthy and corporations. A spirit of scarcity has been implemented when questions are raised about caring for the most vulnerable people in our nation: children, immigrants, the elderly, the under-employed. "So sorry, there just isn't any money to provide for the Children's Health Insurance Program any longer. Sorry." CHIP will be defunded in March. Sorry, no money.

That is the reality of our experiment in democracy. More and more people will face need this year. So, what is the church's role in the world as it is, and how will New Spirit decide to help our members and east Tucson to better navigate these uncertain times?

I believe that is our mission. Our Faith is in Jesus. Jesus advocated for the little, the least and the last. He did that in the face of Pharisees and Sadducees, the wealthiest of Israel's citizens. We believe and teach that the Scripture calls us to practice care for the less fortunate. That is part of New Spirit's DNA. You do that ministry like few other congregations of faithful people. With the vision of Laurie Bernard, Cathy Cermak, Marty Mostaff, and Phil Pierce New Spirit is actively engaging people at the level of their need.

Our Hope is in Grace. Grace is the "big" Lutheran word, and it carries with it an expectation: we claim God's love for us, and because we do, we will love strangers and others just like God loves us. You can't do that half-heartedly. So this year I am going to encourage the Church Council to consider ways we can better be "the grace of God on this corner of Camino Seco and Old Spanish Trail." Our hope is in Grace, and every day we give thanks to God for that love. We do.

Our Strength is in Love. Love is patient and kind. It is not jealous or boastful. It is not rude or snarky. Love embraces imperfection. Love welcomes the broken to be loved whole. Love cares deeply for children, youth, young adults, families, families fractured by divorce. Love cares deeply for people struggling with addictions, people with really poor senses of self, people who question everything and find it difficult to trust anyone. Love stands with them, best.

I believe that we are ready for a new way to understand what God is expecting of us. I see images of unlocked doors and simple meals woven with caring conversations. I see new friends being made out of old acquaintances. I see children and youth safely connecting with seniors and grandparents. I see a renewed interest in what it means to say "I am Christian, of the Lutheran persuasion." I see new emphasis on talking together, with vulnerability and with confident assurance. I see better understanding leading us into the unknown future with clearer faith, hope, and love.

Welcome to 2018! I look forward to our journey together!!!

Faithfully,

Pastor Alan





Church website is being built by **Tagline Media**, a locally owned business. The website is being built to be both engaging and dynamic; easy to navigate and fully up-to-date with church happenings. Once we are ready to “set sail” we will need to train 6 to 8 people to oversee the pretty self-updating website. The proto-type website was shown at the December Church Council Meeting and all the members were excited to see it.

Come on New Spirit, we are only about ten years behind the learning curve! We need to be actively and contemporarily on the web for the world to see!!!

So, now all we need is you to engage.....what do you say?



Thank You, thank you, thank you.... The youth preparing to attend the ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston in June, 2018 held a Chili and Cornbread Supper following the Annual Meeting. At that time you gave \$600 toward our trip. Thank you ever so much. Amber, Caitlyn, Jakob, Katie, Valerie Friend, and Pastor Alan.

Debora's Gathering Women's Bible Study met on December 13. We would like to have more ladies join us on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 3:15 in room 105.

This meeting opened with Linda Lamb's devotion which spoke about all the shopping, decorating, eating and rushing around compared to the First Christmas, a simple beginning of the love for us, followed by Christ's death on the cross, a gift for all of us! Christmas music was a big part of the meeting with singing. We did guess the song title of various carols when a few notes were played. Then we sang them. Joyce's meditation gave words for member's service in church and we sang related carols. Using an article from our Gather magazine we discussed that some gifts are not welcomed but when hearts are ready to receive gifts there is joy. Humanity has received the perfect gift of God in Jesus. Gloria read and showed a beautifully illustrated children's book called – T'was the Night Before Christmas in the Desert. Our group is part of Church Women United which includes women of all Faiths. The next meeting will be at Streams in the Desert on Jan. 6. The program will be on Human Rights. It is a good feeling to be with women from many churches.



For registration information, call Joyce Dow.

We thank the women of New Spirit for their **THANK OFFERING** of \$965. Started by women long ago, their thank offering each day was put in a small box and offered in November. Could more of you come and spend 2 hours with us once a week? Following the study, we go to the Wed. night suppers. The next 4 month's studies are written by Rev. Mark Powell who has written more than 100 articles and 25 books on the bible and religion. The first study will be - Learning from other interpretations. He also will be speaking in Surprise, AZ. in February if anyone is interested. Pick up an issue of the Gather Magazine at the visitor center.

Gloria Burke, Secretary

“When a prayer becomes a sermon.” Prayers are an essential and complicated commodity in the life of the church. They are intended to plead for people in need of healing, or domestic safety, or encouragement in a difficult time. Prayers can be words of praise for all that God has given in this life, and in this world. Prayers can be confessions, acknowledging our shortcomings and pleading for mercy. Prayers can be vehicles of thanksgiving. Prayers can meditate on God’s presence and the depth of that holy reality.



But, prayers are not intended to be sermons. Those “sermons” are often spoken, instructing God to “move the people to do this or that”, or “make them understand they need to give more, or volunteer more.” In all reality, we don’t instruct God in doing anything. But, it can be a very tempting opportunity to “let the people hear what the pray-er wants those people to hear.” In those situations, the prayer leaves the realm of holy conversation, and becomes a monologue from a “bully pulpit” It may sound like this “...just like it says in the prayer book I’ve been reading” is not a petition for God to bless, it is a sermon to teach or instruct “those people to do what I think they should do.” It happens. It is something that we can all learn from as well.

We already have time set aside in every worship service for the sermon, interpreting the Scripture for daily living. If you are asked to offer prayers at worship or group settings be wary of using those words to tell God how those other people need to live, believe, or act.



Church Council Retreat The Church Council will be going on Retreat at the retreat center in St. David, AZ. Our two-and-a-half day retreat will help us look at where New Spirit has come in the past year, and how we can best prepare for the future. We have a variety of sessions planned to open eyes, to lay out strategies, and to make conscious plans for the transition when Pastor Alan retires. Lots to talk about. Pray for the Council as they take on this vital work.

Wednesday Evening Suppers return January 3rd. Would you like to talk about **4:00 - 5:30 p.m. classes or study groups**. With as many people as we have who do not drive at night, a 4:00 class may be more convenient. **Would you come to a 4:00 p.m. class or book-study?**

Looking ahead.....WORSHIP planning for Holy Week and Easter needs to happen this month. Would you be willing to work with a small group of 4-5 people to plan worship, chancel decoration, and Holy Week services? Will we have a **Maundy Thursday supper that could lead us into worship? What might Good Friday become? What might SonRise Service look like?**

It is not too early to think about SALCA Camp. This year’s camp is May 28 – June 1. Camp is for students who have completed 3rd – 8th grade and is held at the **Triangle Y Ranch Camp in Catalina, AZ.** New Spirit pays half-registration costs.

New Member Class is being offered **Saturday, January 13th, from 9:00 – 2:00.** Members will be received on **Sunday, January 14th.**

Thank you for your growing generosity! Each year I am blessed to receive cards, cookies, and gifts at Christmas-time. I am humbled by your growing generosity. Thank you. It is my joy to lead this congregation in our faithful journey. Your kindnesses are amazing. Thank you! Pastor Alan



First of all, thank you to all who attended our annual meeting! You who didn't stay for dinner, you missed a great chili supper.

To reiterate results of our election:
Phil Pierce—Vice-President
Dave Lynch—Member at Large
Jenny Kwapich—Member at Large
David Grundstrom —Member at Large

Since the meeting Shelley Colwell has volunteered and been appointed by the Council as Secretary.

Remaining Council members are: Renee Geiger, Martin Mosthaff as Members at Large, Terry Wolfe as Treasurer, Susan Armstrong as President and me as President Emeritus. By the way, council is about leadership, attending the monthly meeting and supporting our ministries, however that may look. In order to find the A/C project, we will be looking at memorial funds and welcome any donations you might see fit. Just make sure it doesn't take away from your regular pledge. We also will be renaming the designated funds. From here on, it will be called "restricted funds" as it more accurately describes those monies. We're making good progress on our new website. We also agreed to celebrate Mardi Gras just before Ash Wednesday. It's always a lot of fun. Watch for more info.

Again, I thank you for supporting me this past year as your president.
Brigitte Stuetze

MARDI GRAS – SAVE THE DATE!!!

We're trying something new this year. We will be celebrating Mardi Gras late afternoon/early evening on Saturday, February 10, 2018, to better accommodate families and school, working folks and folks who don't like driving at night. We hope to have live music, traditional food (perhaps a couple new recipes), activities for kids, etc. Look for more details and sign-up sheets in the coming weeks.



January Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations



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| 1/6 Joe & Flo Vohnoutka
(Anniversary) | 1/17 Brigitte Stuetze | 1/29 Marcia Kidder |
| 1/7 Maxine Nibbe
Jeremy & Jenny Kwapich
(Anniversary) | 1/20 Karen Colwell
Ellen Canterbury | 1/31 Elise Stone |
| 1/15 Phyllis Wagner | 1/23 Germaine Gillette | |

Happy New Year!

When I began attending worship services in 2014-2016, I was embraced by several members of the congregation. These wonderful people were always smiling, talkative and engaging to me. I think it is important that everyone who comes to New Spirit should feel loved, needed, accepted and lifted. This goes for visitors as well as the congregation. Before becoming a member, it was extremely helpful when members would approach me wearing their name badges. I am not great with remembering names so putting a name tag together with a person's face made it easier for me to learn other's names. I think it is vital that members wear their name badges, not only for other members like me, but more importantly, for the visitors we greet and welcome to our church.

We need to be deeply aware of what our purpose of coming to church on Sunday is all about. In my mind, there is more than one purpose. First and foremost, it is to worship God and Jesus. For me, being at church on Sunday is a deeply spiritual experience. It's also about being with friends who share the same spiritual experience and being able to discuss and talk to others. Praying at home, at work, in my car, etc., gives me great joy. However, being around others during church services to pray fills my heart to know that no matter what each person is praying for/about, united we become a great force.

One reason people resist change is because they focus on what they have to give up, instead of what they have to give (or gain). Change is never easy. Fear is a four-letter word that has scared me to the core of my soul over the years. When I stepped out of my "comfort zone" a few years back with regards to painting, I had a lot of ideas on how I was going to paint. I only wanted to paint certain things or use certain techniques that I felt comfortable with and thought I could do well. On the first painting I ever did, my dear friend, and amazing artist herself, Peggy Krantz, had me write the word "FEAR" on the canvas before I started. I was still fearful during the process that day, but I also felt that I was gaining skills and enjoying myself. By giving up my fear, I experienced happiness and a sense of accomplishment. I think that everyone in our congregation could step out of their "comfort zone" and share in some way at our church. We need volunteers in many areas. There are always various options in the bulletin and monthly newsletter. I started by assisting one of the cook teams for the Wednesday evening meals. I could tell they needed help and so I asked them if they needed help. Before I knew it, I was on a cook team. I have enjoyed the interactions with the others on my team, as well as feeling like I'm part of something bigger.

I became a member of New Spirit Lutheran Church in the fall of 2016. I feel comfortable and enjoy the relationships I have built with several members. I consider them my friends/family. I look forward to getting to know more members of this congregation. Church is not something you go to, it's a family you belong to.

I look forward to being the President of the Church Council in 2018 and building our family.

Susan Armstrong

Thank you to Ken Dobbs who scanned and categorized hundreds of pictures from New Spirit/ Spanish Trail's history. We are still figuring the "tech stuff" to make them available to members for reminiscing.

Shout out's to Laurie Bernard and her whole team who organize "Homeless Blessings" on the 2nd Saturday of each month. In December we hosted 30+ homeless people.

Ken Dobbs for spearheading the K-Hall air conditioning project.

Don Austin and Steve Lamb our faithful techs, and Dave Lynch who is learning the system.

David Grundstom, Dave Lynch, Shelley Colwell, and Phil Pierce for stepping up to serve on the Church Council. Yes!!!

The Praise Team as they began their 17th year leading the 9:00 service on the 1st Sunday of Advent!

December cook team for great comfort food in December. Good Stuff!!!

All who gave for the Sunday School Angel Tree for the Ronald McDonald House, and to those who shared with the family of mom and five kids. Your generosity was received with great celebration!

New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85710

Shout-Outs

SHOUT OUT- *To our council for their service this past year but particularly to : Cathy Cermak, Elise Stone, and Barbara Rebok as they completed 3 years of service.*

SHOUT OUT - *To the December hospitality team led by Terry Wolfe.*

SHOUT OUT - *To Stefan for the delicious breakfast he served us.*

SHOUT OUT - *To our proofreaders: Ana MacKay, Mary Lou Rex and Sharon Dobbs.*

SHOUT OUT - *John Lukecart for keeping our church home clean*

SHOUT OUT - *All volunteers for Homeless Blessing as well as Blessings in a Backpack. You know who you are!*

SHOUT OUT - *To Phil Pierce and Laurie Bernard for their hard work in getting the Jensen family settled.*

SHOUT OUT - *Our techs: Don Austin, Steve Lamb and Dave Lynch*



Sundays:

9:00 am Arise to Praise

(Spirited Contemporary Worship)

10:15 – 11:00 am Sunday School for all ages

11:00 am Traditions

(Classic Hymns & Liturgies)

Wednesdays: 5:30 pm Dinner, 6:15pm Classes

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