

That's The Spirit!

Rev. Greg Hartman,
Pastor

New Spirit Lutheran Church
*Our faith is in Jesus.
Our hope is in grace.
Our strength is in love.*

April 2024

Beloved Saints of New Spirit,

We have made it through the heaviness and solemnness of the 40 days of Lent. We have celebrated the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. We have welcomed back the Alleluia. Our worship services will once again feel more joy filled and hopeful, at least for a while. Eventually we will lose that feeling of joy that comes with Easter Sunday. Often as that joy and exuberance fades, so does our hope because life happens. The day-to-day doldrums of life take their toll.

So where do we find our hope? Where do we find hope as we are studying heavy topics like poverty, homelessness, racism, LGBTQIA2S+ issues, etc? These topics are hard to discuss. Sometimes even mentioning these topics can lead to anger, frustration, desperation, and more. We feel our hearts begin to race when discussing these topics. We can feel overwhelmed during these conversations. Often, we simply avoid talking about them so that we don't have to deal with the emotions. We would rather ignore and look the other way instead of talking, let alone taking action.

Where is our hope? How do we live a life based in the hope we are given? Do we believe or have hope that things can actually be better?

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."
- *Desmond Tutu*

I do have hope that things can be better for all of us. I have hope that the love we are shown through Jesus can and will change this world for the better for all people. It is out of hope for a better world that I go through the process of learning and changing. It is hope that drives me to confront my own shortcomings. It is love and hope that leads me to preach about change. In 1st Corinthians 13:13 Paul reminds us that Faith, Hope, and Love abide. Remember abiding means to be present, or dwell. The writer of the gospel of John uses abide to mean that things are so interconnected that it is impossible to see where one ends, and another begins. Hope is alive! Love is alive! Jesus lives! And because of that, things really can change even when things seem overwhelming.



Pastor Hartman

April Prayer

Risen Lord, we give you thanks for all that you do for us. We give you thanks for walking with us each and every day. Sometimes our hope fades, we pray that you keep the fires of love and hope burning inside each of us and in our community here at New Spirit. We pray that you continue to empower us to be a place and people that proclaims love and hope for all. Continue to send your spirit to guide us as we undertake the work that you have set before us. Amen



I HAVE THIS HOPE by Cathy Cermak

As we end our first quarter of Pastor's book study and discussions on poverty and racism, I can't help feeling overwhelmed and discouraged. The centuries' old systems set in place by the "powers and principalities" of this world, by "Empire," and designed to keep the poor, disenfranchised, and oppressed powerless and the rich and entitled in power have existed since before Jesus' time on earth. So what are we to do? How can we possibly fight against the hatred, greed, evil and troubles that have always been a part of life? Didn't Buddha say, "life is suffering," so why bother? And even Jesus said, "In this world you will have trouble." John 16:33.

Ahh, but Jesus said more than those seven words! The whole verse reads: "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world." So even in the midst of my despair and sadness, I have this hope because of Jesus. Because Jesus took the hatred, horrors, pain and suffering of this world to the cross; because Jesus overcame the world and rose from the dead; because Jesus wants me to care, *because Jesus lives!* I must believe this profoundly if I am to move forward. **We, New Spirit, must believe this profoundly if we are to make a difference!**

At the end of each book study discussion, Pastor asks, "What can New Spirit do?" A few ideas we've thrown around include:

We must educate ourselves and dialogue even more about poverty and racism. (For starters, join Pastor's book study and discussion and/or participate in the upcoming Mitigating Racism & Building Community Zoom Workshop sponsored by phoenixpeacebuilders.org and the AZ Poor Peoples' Campaign.)

Learn more about poverty assistance and housing programs, eligibility and rules (food, healthcare, childcare and housing), so we can better assist and advocate for our neighbors in need. Learn more about housing rights.

Learn more about voters' rights in AZ to facilitate our neighbors to use their voices.

Write to our local and national legislators about our concerns and the issues we support. It's important that they hear from us and know that not all Christians support the right-wing Christian Nationalist agenda. A good start is to sign up for LAMA's newsletter (at lamaz.org.) to stay informed about urgent issues.

Provide information and advocacy services to the poor (for food, poverty programs, housing and/or voting assistance).

Participate in the AZ Poor Peoples' Campaign and help expand it in Tucson.

Confront racist, anti-poor and anti-LGBTQIA+ statements and biases when we encounter them (even in ourselves). Make a stand.

So, there is reason for my hope. We are not alone. Jesus is with us in these struggles and this work because it is His work also. There's an old Tenth Avenue North song called, "I Have This Hope". I encourage you to listen to it on YouTube. The chorus goes,

"I have this hope
In the depth of my soul
In the flood or the fire
You're with me and You won't let go."

Jesus won't let go of us, New Spirit.



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE: Reasons to Celebrate at New Spirit

Just a couple of months ago we were planning for our ministry activities for 2024, and because of your generosity, intended giving increased by 20% over 2023. And now that we are actively engaged in our planned ministry growth it's time to share how the first part of 2024 is progressing. Because of your faithful giving, member contributions through February to fund our ministries were \$7,750 over budget. Due in part to the generous annual gifts received from our members, we had sufficient funds to cover our expenses and we did not have to draw down on our reserves in February.



So what's ahead? There are more ministry activities being planned, and with the continued generosity of your time, talents and financial support, we look forward to increased participation and impact within the New Spirit family and into our community.

As we continue to grow a Culture of Compassion at New Spirit, we offer a heartfelt thank you for your prayerful support.

Stewardship Committee

COUNCIL NEWS by Cathy Cermak

What flickering lights? Fuzzy screen images? Yes, we've all noticed them, and they bug some of us more than others. Council has been discussing them, and Lorrie Firth and Pastor have been diligently looking for resources and estimates to solve both the light panel and projector issues. So stay tuned for progress!

Church council has continued to discuss security options around our campus. Options discussed include: an assessment of our outdoor lighting to see what may need to be added; a buzzer, automatic door and camera system for the office door to provide better security for staff; a passive camera system; and fencing and gating around the courtyard. If you have any ideas, suggestions or possible contractor resources, please let a council member know.

Council members have been working on other administrative issues like developing a contract agreement for outside groups to use our facilities and guidelines for volunteers for ministries such as Homeless Blessings. Our retreat is tentatively planned for Sunday, April 14.



JOINT EFFORT!

The Witness and Welcome team joined the Stewardship team in sending out individual invitations to come and worship with us on Easter.

We mailed out 113 cards. Thanks to all who helped prep those invites. Now comes the task to welcome those visiting!

PLASTICS RECYCLING

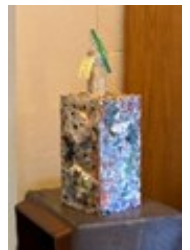
Craig Geiger and I are so grateful for how you all have embraced the plastic drive. Let's be honest, Craig does just about all the delivering. This picture shows an example of the blocks that are created from the plastic that is recycled. Thank you Rick & Lorrie Firth for getting us the sample.

If you need a refresher on what they take, the list is posted on the bulletin board in the narthex.

Between recycling and composting my trash can takes 2 weeks to fill up.

Keep up the good work!

Brigitte Stuetze



Women's Ministry Group Minutes for March 2024

Women's Ministry Group (WELCA Bible Study Group) met at 1:30 on March 13, 2024, at the church.

Our Bible study was part three of a four part "Scripture and Nature" series "Rivers". When Christians think of rivers, we often think of baptism. Jesus was baptized in a river, as were countless saints before us. We still, symbolically, gather at the river to name the promises of God's enduring grace. We pray and sing about rivers that wash us clean, give us sustaining life, form us into community, and draw us into the current of grace.

We assembled Easter cards to send. Discussion was held to possibly host a missionary speaker for the women of Eastside Lutheran Churches.

We will decide at our next meeting if we will meet for Bible study during the summer months; or possibly get together for lunch.

Our next gathering is April 10, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. at the church. We will be studying session four of Scripture and Nature "Food".

Linda Lamb – Secretary



ALTAR CARE:



The altar care team is in need of helpers for set up as well as clean up. It's a simple task and vital for worship. Contact me for more info.

Brigitte Stuetze

Fellowship Dinner

The MONTHLY Tuesday night dinner will resume this month. It will be held on April 16th. This month's theme is Italian. The sign up sheet is posted in the Narthex if you would like to participate.



April Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations

4/1 Katie Uidenich

4/17 Ron O'Connor

4/20 Steve & Linda Lamb
(Anniversary)

4/2 Jay Schreiber

James West
Linda Burkhardt

4/21 Shereen O'Connor

4/11 Henry Kwapich

4/23 Justin Uidenich

4/12 Theron Nesler

4/25 Jenny Kwapich

4/14 Deb Klink



4/30 Ken Dobbs



BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Who will feed the kids this weekend?



We are blessed to provide snack packs for 325 students each weekend for Steele, Henry, Ford, and Erickson Elementary schools. We always include a special treat for holidays.

For regular contributions, please make your tax-deductible check to Blessings in a Backpack. You can drop it in the offering plate, drop it off at the church office, or drop it directly in the mail to BIB Lockbox, PO Box 950291, Louisville, KY 40295. **Remember to put Steele Elementary on the memo line.** You can also donate online through the New Spirit Lutheran Church website. Just click on the donate button.

Our team members are hard at work to keep up with the added students each week. Learn more about what we do and how you can help. **We need volunteers to help with fund raising, planning, purchasing, packing, delivery, and gardening. If you like to shop, join our team!**

During the school year, packing is done on Tuesdays from 8:00 to 9:30 AM. Deliveries are done in the mornings after packing (if you want to help deliver, you can pick the day you are available).

Contact Laurie Bernard at lbernard2008@hotmail.com with questions.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THIS MINISTRY



HOMELESS BLESSINGS

JOIN US THE 2ND SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
OCTOBER THRU APRIL 1PM TO 3PM

WE NOW COLLECT DOG/CAT FOOD, TOWELS, AND BEDDING FOR DONATION TO THE PIMA
ANIMAL CARE CENTER

FOOD INSECURITY AFFECTS ALL AGES

Our next event is April 13th. Join us for a bar-b-que for our last afternoon event. Beginning in May, our event will be held from 9am to 11am.

New Spirit is reaching at least 150 people every month with our events and hand out bags. Our bags contain \$15 of supplies and food. A contribution of \$30 will make a difference to 2 people on the street. May not seem like much, but to them it is.

If you'd like to help our ministry with a cash donation, please make your tax-deductible check to New Spirit Lutheran Church with the notation for Homeless Blessings in the memo. You can drop it in the offering plate, drop it off at the church office, or mail it to NSLC, 8701 E. Old Spanish Trail, Tucson, AZ 85710. You can also donate online through the New Spirit Lutheran Church website. Just click on the donate button.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THIS MISSION

Want to help? Contact NSLC Office or Laurie Bernard at lbernard2008@hotmail.com

New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85710

Shout-Outs



SHOUT OUT - To Lorrie Firth and team in facilitating additional mailings of invites for our Easter service.

SHOUT OUT - To March hospitality team for feeding us 5 Sundays, including Easter and Maundy Thursday.

SHOUT OUT - To our readers at the services.

SHOUT OUT - To Robin Hughes, Laurie Bernard, Heather Thatcher and all the others for creating a lovely flower cross.

SHOUT OUT - To Karen Colwell for the Sanctuary window art.

SHOUT OUT - To our Praise Team which so enhances our services.

SHOUT OUT - To Kimmie and Lynn who warmed up our organ for a nice change.

SHOUT OUT - To Bob Daliege for doing the set up for communion faithfully every Sunday.

SHOUT OUT - To Sharon & Ken Dobbs, Nancy Cunningham, Lynda Grochowski for counting the noisy offering coins.

Please submit words of thanks and praise to Nancy at nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org by the 15th of each month to be placed in the newsletter. Thank you!

Sundays:

10:00 am Worship

You can currently watch each week's message on YouTube.

How to contact us:

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