

# 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 2025

Beloved of New Spirit,

Maybe it is the change in weather and seeing plants beginning to bud again, but I am filled with hope. Maybe it is getting ready to celebrate Easter, but I have excitement for the coming days.

Maybe it is how we have been doing ministry together lately that has strengthened that hope and excitement. New Spirit Lutheran Church, we continue to make strong proclamations of God's love and care for all people. I am writing this the day after the March 30<sup>th</sup> noisy offering was counted. We often collect a couple hundred dollars when we take up a noisy offering, this time you all once again hit a homerun! We collected \$455.19 in our last noisy offering! We collected this for our siblings at San Juan Bautista, an ELCA congregation on the southside of Tucson. This is yet another example of how we work to have a positive impact on those beyond our walls.

There has also been growing activity and excitement here at New Spirit. There are people that are bringing forward new ideas for ministry. We are trying new things in worship. There are more people attending Bible Study. When I look out on a Sunday morning during worship, I see more people inviting friends to attend worship. A few days after I write this, we will be hosting our first new member class of the year. We have plans to have a new member class every quarter of the year. What a long way we have come regarding new members! This month we will also vote to publicly commit to welcoming those that the church has not done a good job of including. I don't know about you, but I certainly feel the working of the Holy Spirit here.

This will be my 3<sup>rd</sup> Easter to celebrate with you, and I am simply amazed by where we find ourselves now. Our identity together is taking root and God is continuing to enliven us. On my Pastor Greg Hartman Facebook page I wrote the following recently "When people ask how my current congregational call is going, I often find myself speechless...We are a congregation that lives into the radical love of God shown through the life, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus. We are a congregation that also has a little "edge" to us and doesn't focus on keeping the peace or playing nice when it means others are dealing with injustice, bigotry, etc. We will flip a table. We will continue to strengthen communities and care of "the least of these"."

We know that there is a lot of negativity out there right now, and we need to remain aware of that. We also sometimes need to take a step back and remember all the amazing things that are also happening. First, and foremost we must remember how God has been active in our lives. God promises to never leave us. Romans 8:39 reminds us that "No power in the sky above or in the earth below—indeed, nothing in all creation will ever be able to separate us from the love of God that is revealed in Christ Jesus our Lord." Second, we must use our voices and blessings for those that are struggling. Luther is said to have said "God does not need our works, but our neighbors do". So while we are counting our blessings and celebrate the awesome things that are happening, we must also pay attention to where God is calling us to act.

HAVE  
faith  
GATHER hope  
SHARE love

Pastor Hartman

## Holy Week Schedule –

Holy Week is April 13 – April 20.

### **April 13 – Palm/Passion Sunday**

**April 17 - Maundy Thursday**, 6:00pm Dinner Church worship. (Congregation members are being asked to bring side dishes and desserts.)

**April 18 - Good Friday**, our evening service at 6:00pm, Tenebrae worship service

**April 20 - Easter Sunday**, Worship service at 10:00 am. (Bring flowers for the Easter Cross by 9 am)

Remember to invite someone to these services!



### **"Should I go to church?"**

That question weighed on me. I didn't really believe in church. And honestly, life was going pretty well without it.

For three Sundays in a row, I sat in the parking lot of New Spirit Lutheran Church, debating whether I had the courage to step inside. I had been to more churches than I could count, but for the past six years, I had been "unchurched." I was unraveling beliefs I could no longer hold onto, searching for anything that still felt true. I was like the woman in the Bible who had lost a coin, turning everything upside down to find it. But what if it wasn't there?

So how did I end up in that parking lot? It started with a simple desire to help others. I came across their Homeless Blessings ministry and thought, *This is something meaningful I could do. I wonder if they'd even welcome me there?*

I checked out their website and read the welcome statement. And for the first time in a long time, I felt *seen*. I felt *known*. It was as if they were speaking directly to me, embracing my doubts, my questions, my past. That was reassuring. After all, I'm not everyone's cup of tea!

That first Sunday inside was better than I expected. I was welcomed—genuinely, warmly—but never pressured. The service was both familiar and yet completely new. And when I walked out, I felt something I hadn't felt in years: *hunger*. A deep longing to know more.

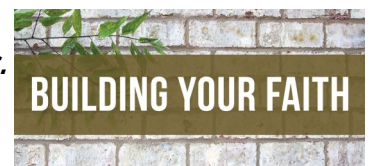
Since then, I have changed. As I learn more about Lutheran theology, as I experience God's Grace in word and sacrament, as I re-read scripture with fresh eyes, I am *blown away* by how freeing, how life-giving, this Good News of Jesus really is. The weight I had been carrying—the hurt, the wariness, the fear of being forced into a mold—began to lift. I had wondered if God had abandoned us to figure things out on our own. But what I see now is this—God is always moving towards us, reaching out to love us all.

I am thankful for New Spirit. Being here has helped me *receive* God's love, not just intellectually, but deep in my soul. It has given me the courage to put that love into action and, perhaps most terrifying of all, to *hope again*.

I am not perfect. I don't have many answers. But I am learning—learning to trust in God's promises, learning the power of God's grace.

Thank you for letting me share a piece of my story. I can't wait to hear *yours*.

Carol Johnston



## The ABC's of QCD's

What is a QCD you might be asking yourself? QCD stands for a **Qualified Charitable Distribution** which offer eligible older Americans a great way to easily give to a charitable organization such as New Spirit Lutheran Church.



As many of you know, once you reach age 73 you must take a Required Minimum Distribution (known as a RMD) from your IRA even if you don't need or want the funds. The amount of your RMD becomes taxable income to you. With a QCD, you can transfer funds directly from your IRA to New Spirit and it will count towards your RMD for the year.

### Why might a QCD be better than a charitable deduction?

A QCD can be a better tax strategy than a charitable deduction in some cases because it doesn't increase your taxable income. Charitable deductions may reduce taxable income but only if you itemize deductions.

A QCD might make sense for you if perhaps you are wanting to make a larger gift but don't have the cash to do so. Rather than taking a distribution from your IRA, paying taxes on the money and then donating it, you can transfer it directly from your IRA and not pay taxes on the distribution.

If you are 70 1/2 but not taking RMD's, you can still make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA to New Spirit.

### The Fine Print

- The QCD must be a direct transfer from your IRA to New Spirit and/or another charity.
- Individuals can donate up to \$108,000 to one or more charities per year.
- QCDs can only be made for the current calendar year.
- QCDs must be made by the same deadline as a normal distribution, usually December 31.
- QCDs are reported on Line 4 of Form 1040 or Form 1040-SR.
- You must receive a written acknowledgement from the designated charity before filing your taxes.

As always, please consult your financial advisor and/or tax accountant to determine if a QCD makes sense for you.

If you have questions about Qualified Charitable Distributions and would like further information, please feel free to call Jan Pearson at (608) 769-2257 or e-mail her at [janpearson418@gmail.com](mailto:janpearson418@gmail.com).

Can you please transfer it into a document? It begins with the ABC's of QCD's.

## April 2025 Prayer

Mighty and merciful God, lover of justice and equity, you call us to support the weak, to help those who suffer, and to honor all people. By the power of your Holy Spirit, make us advocates for your justice and instruments of your peace, so that all may be reconciled in your beloved community; through Jesus Christ our Savior. Amen (from All Creation Sings)



## Fellowship Dinner

We will be taking a break from our Wednesday night dinner during the month of April. We will resume again May 21, then we will be taking our summer break. No dinner during the months of June, July and August. Look for a sign up sheet in the Narthex for May.

## WHY ATTEND BIBLE STUDY?

As a new member of New Spirit Lutheran Church (NSLC) who had never attended Bible study before, I was surprised when my wife, Kitty, recommended I attend the next Wednesday meeting at NSLC. After some thought I decided to go and see what it was about. I had been under the impression that Bible study simply consisted of reading the Bible from Genesis to Revelation during the year and then repeating. However, after my first Bible study at NSLC I discovered that it was an experience I never expected. I found that Bible study with Pastor Hartman and other members of the group deepened my relationship with God by my being able to better understand the scriptures especially those relating to the principles of faith, grace, love, and my personal relationship with God. I truly believe Bible study can also be a valuable tool for fellowship and the encouragement of these principles within the church and the community. Try it, you'll like it.



Ed Glanz

## Women's Ministry Group Gathering in March 2025

Women's Ministry Group (WELCA Bible Study Group) met at 1:30 p.m. on March 12, 2025, at the church.

Our Bible study was Session 2: Faithfulness; Faith in the Depths: Psalm 22. In Psalm 22, we have a model for praising God in distress. Even when it feels next to impossible to sing God's praise, we can read this Psalm and know that God will never stop loving us. In turning to scripture, we grow closer to God.

To celebrate St Patrick's Day; the long-term care patients at the Haven were treated to shamrocks and treats made and delivered by our Sunday School students. Future discussions will be held for the possibility of New Spirit children and adults going caroling during the Christmas season for all the Haven residents.

Due to a low balance and subject to bank fees being charged: it was decided to close our bank account and use whatever monies are collected for New Spirit Church projects.

Three of our members, Joyce Dow, Barbara Rebok and Linda Lamb attended the Kino Conference Women's Spring Gathering "Women on the Move" held on March 8, 2025, at Streams in the Desert Lutheran Church, 5360 E Pima Street, Tucson, Arizona. Joyce Dow presented the devotions relating to the Ruth and Naomi story.

Reverend Candace Mayer, Director of Springboard Home Center for Girls spoke about their program. Springboard is a part of Teen Challenge Family of Arizona. This is a faith-based program (no government funds). The mission is to help girls between the ages of 12 to 17 to become mentally stable, emotionally balanced, socially adjusted, physically well and spiritually alive. The Christ centered approach allows these girls to explore and find healing.

One of the ways to support this program is to shop at Blessingdales Thrift Stores. Two locations in Tucson are: 3960 N Stone Ave and 4817 E Speedway Blvd. Jean Finingin from Sister Jose Women's Center did a presentation on their program and the facility expansion projects to be able to offer more accommodation and programs. All women and their pets are welcome at Sister Jose's.



Our next gathering will be on April 9, 2025, at 1:30 p.m. at the church.

Linda Lamb – Secretary

**Synod Assembly:**



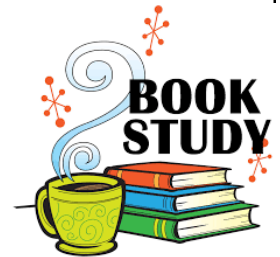
Do you love doing “the business of the church”? Do you want to be part of helping set the direction for the Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA? New Spirit is looking for 2 people to join Pastor in attending Synod Assembly. This year’s Synod Assembly will take place June 12 to 13 at Community Lutheran Church in Las Vegas. Please let Pastor Hartman know if you are interested in attending.

**My experience attending book studies at New Spirit.**

It’s been over a year now and I have attended over half of the monthly discussion get-togethers, so let me tell you about my experience. I started out as a quiet observer, learning A LOT about poverty (a key topic for 2024 at New Spirit) and many related issues revolving around its impact on millions across America, not to mention within our Tucson community.


Topics that we discussed included some that I hadn’t really thought too much about and tended to turn away from addressing them. Slowly I started participating more in the discussions. As I did that, I also started seeing and paying more attention to people affected by the many aspects of poverty and homelessness as I traveled around Tucson. They stopped being “ghosts” in my mind, and my mind and heart thought back to the WWJD (What Would Jesus Do) movement and how each of our book study sessions end. At the end of each book study, the question is asked: What can YOU, or WE as a group (small as we may be), do NOW to make a positive impact in this world we live in today – in this part of Tucson, in our community, in our life.

So, I started asking myself: What CAN I do, and I now look for ways to recognize, show love and help others as our paths cross. Going to book studies at New Spirit is expanding my understanding of how my interactions with others represent God’s love to be shared.



Lorrie F.

**April & May Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations**

4/1 Katie Uidenich	4/21 Shereen O’Connor	05/02 Stephen Lamb
4/11 Henry Kwapich	4/23 Justin Uidenich	05/03 Colleen Busboom-Green
4/12 Theron Nesler	4/25 Jenny Kwapich	05/15 Violet Thatcher
4/17 Ron O’Connor James West Linda Burkhardt	4/30 Ken Dobbs	05/20 Jamie Buglewicz
04/18 Jan Pearson		05/25 Robert Daliege
4/20 Steve & Linda Lamb (Anniversary)		05/30 Ramon Ihrke
		05/31 Diane Shreiner



# BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

*Who will feed the kids this weekend?*  
**NEW SPIRIT LUTHERAN CHURCH WILL!**

Blessings in a Backpack (BIB) is a national program that partners with elementary schools through churches and other community organizations to provide weekend food to low-income children who qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced-Price Meal Program. Last year BIB provided 3,183,295 hunger-free weekends at 1118 locations in 44 states and Washington, DC. Just \$4.60 per weekend (\$175 total) feeds a child in the program for the 38 weekends of the school year. Each child receives a bag of nonperishable food that includes cereal, mac and cheese, rice, beans, canned meat, fruit cups, granola bars, etc., to take home. While children receive free school lunches during the week, they may not have enough to eat over the weekend. The supplemental food they receive through BIB may be the only food they have to get through the weekend.

In 2012 New Spirit made a commitment to sponsor this hunger outreach program on Tucson's east side. We served 40 children from two schools in the first year. The second year, with generous congregational donations and a \$1,000 grant from one Walmart store, we were able to increase our support to 100 children in three schools. For the 2024-2025 school year, we will be serving 363 children. Each week volunteers purchase food and pack bags and deliver them to the schools (often to be greeted by the children who receive them!). We try to supply enough food to modestly supplement the whole family each weekend (e.g., providing a box of mac and cheese vs. an individual portion). We now have 5 fruit trees on our campus to provide future fresh fruit in our snack packs.

The 363 children we currently serve are from five east side elementary schools: Steele at 700 S. Sarnoff Drive; Erickson at 6750 E. Stella Road; Henry at 650 N. Igo Way; Ford at 8001 E. Stella Road; and Soleng Tom at 10520 E. Camino Quince.

Being well nourished vs. hunger can have a profound impact on a child's academic performance, school attendance, behavior and health. This is the vision of Blessings in a Backpack and New Spirit – happy, healthy children who can focus on school performance, attend regularly, and demonstrate academic success because of having full bellies.

Help us alleviate hunger in our part of the world. We have volunteer positions available for grant research, food procurement, packing, and delivery. Join us for packing at New Spirit every Tuesday at 8AM to see how we do it!

Contact Laurie Bernard at [lbernard2008@hotmail.com](mailto:lbernard2008@hotmail.com) with questions.

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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THIS MINISTRY

## HOMELESS BLESSINGS "BECAUSE WE CARE"



JOIN US THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
OCTOBER THROUGH APRIL, 1PM TO 3PM  
MAY THRU SEPTEMBER 9AM TO 11AM

Led by the Holy Spirit and Jesus's call to feed the hungry, in 2014 New Spirit began our outreach to the homeless population at a local park in central Tucson. We soon discovered a need on Tucson's east side, where there are little services for those on the street as most shelters are located on the south and west areas of Tucson.

"In 2015, we expanded our ministry to include a monthly event on our campus serving between 25-30 homeless and financially challenged clients. We share hygiene products, tarps, backpacks, blankets, socks, underwear, hats, gloves, and hot homecooked meals on the New Spirit Campus. We partner with local care providers to offer housing, mental health support, and even liaison with the Office of the Police Examiner.

Church members are provided with bags of essential items to share out of their cars with people on the street.

Move forward to 2025. We now serve 50 to 70 clients at our Second Saturday events and have expanded to include haircuts, tests for HIV and Hepatitis C, Narcan for opioid overdoses, packaged food, tents, and sleeping bags.

Over the years this vital ministry has grown to impact/serve/care for over 2,000 people annually.

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.

Contact NSLC Office or Laurie Bernard at [lbernard2008@hotmail.com](mailto:lbernard2008@hotmail.com)

# New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85710

## Shout-Outs

***SHOUT OUT - To Ken Dobbs for repairing the glass in the steeple on Fellowship Hall.***

***SHOUT OUT - To the Praise Team for special music during Lent.***

***SHOUT OUT - To Barb Wadler for helping create procedure lists for ministries.***

***SHOUT OUT - To Rick & Lorrie Firth for being the garden liaison, taking care of our recycling, showing us about water conservation, etc.***

Please submit words of thanks and praise to Nancy at [nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto: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:*

New Spirit Lutheran Church  
8701 E. Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85710

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**E-Mail:** [NewSpiritLutheranTucson@yahoo.com](mailto:NewSpiritLutheranTucson@yahoo.com)

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