

That's The Spirit!

Rev. Carol Breimeier,
Pastor

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

August 2022

ARE YOU FEELING CRANKY?

Me too, a lot more often than usual.

When the large-scale stuff (state, nation, world, planet) seems to be going so badly, it doesn't take as much smaller-scale frustration to tip me over into crankiness. My emotions have gotten a lot less volatile over the years, but I still find myself at their mercy all too often.

So what I'm about to share with you made me sit up and pay attention when I heard it.

I've been going through the "Bible in a Year with Nicky Gumbel" on the YouVersion Bible app, mostly listening to audio when I'm driving in the car. Nicky Gumbel is an Anglican priest and the face of the Alpha program. He introduces each day's readings with a reflection, and, along with a soothing accent and an encouraging tone, he has great insights into living as a follower of Jesus.

Here's what he shared on Day 231 of the Bible in a Year, talking about that day's reading from 1 Corinthians 13:

"I tried following the example of a missionary I once heard about who, each day, would read the four verses from today's New Testament passage, which lists sixteen characteristics of love. For the word 'love' she would substitute her own name. When she reached a characteristic that she knew was not true of her, she had to stop. Her aim was, one day, to get through the whole list."



Here's that passage, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

"Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable; it keeps no record of wrongs; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things."

Nicky Gumbel goes on to confess that, when he first tried this, he didn't get past "Nicky is patient."

Same for me.

How far would you get?

Cont'd page 2

Just doing this exercise in self-examination, no matter the initial result, is a reminder that we can and do grow and change. Our personalities and our reactions aren't set in stone. We're called to love: "We love because God first loved us" (1 John 4:19). We're called to love, which means we're called to be patient, humble, forgiving, hopeful, and persevering ...

... whether we feel like it or not, whether we're stressed or not, whether the person standing opposite us is lovable or not.

I don't know about you, but I find transitions a good time to recommit to being the person I want to be, no matter what I've gotten lazy about, no matter what bad habits I've gotten into.

New Spirit is in a time of transition, with the likelihood that a new pastor will be coming onboard in the not-too-distant future. What a great time for each of us to recommit to being more and more patient (whether we're feeling like it or not), more and more forgiving (whether we're feeling like it or not), more and more hopeful (whether we're feeling like it or not), and more and more loving (whether we're feeling like it or not)!

Let's show the new pastor what a church looks like when it's hitting on all those cylinders! In fact, let's show each other and discover for ourselves the fullness of life and the joy of living together with love abounding more and more.

Whether I'm feeling like it or not, I always find that, when I let love work in me, it feels pretty darn good.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Carol

IMPROVEMENTS COMING SOON

At a special meeting of the New Spirit Church Council on July 26, the council voted to move forward with spending from the Gearhart bequest that had been previously approved by the congregation in April. As costs for so many things have gone up since that initial congregational approval, we gathered new bids and worked back through the list of projects to arrive at a decision for how much to allocate to each within the overall total approved in April.

All of that means that you'll be seeing new flooring in the office wing of the building, new furnishing in the library, a raised wall and a shade to enhance the look and usefulness of the patio, and, eventually, a new electronic sign with which we can communicate who we are with our neighbors and passersby. (We're still waiting on some info for the sign before final approval.)



We appreciate the thought members of the congregation have put into this process. And we're pleased to be able to move forward as New Spirit steps into this next season of our life together.

SHARING OUR BLESSINGS – Endowment Grants Awarded

At the July 19, 2022, meeting, the Endowment Board awarded \$37,800 in grants after receiving \$42,700 in requests. The following organizations and ministries were funded:

Growing Seasons – \$6,000 to continue the two-year initiative of outreach, publicity, and disciple-making to grow New Spirit

Lutheran Campus Ministry – \$3,500 to buy furniture for their new location

Feed My Starving Children – \$3,100 to provide ingredients and supplies to pack nutritional meal packs for food-insecure children around the world

Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest – \$9,200 for LSS' New Beginnings for Immigrants program; provide hygiene products, cleaning supplies and, gift cards for immigrant families

ICS Emergency Financial Assistance Program – \$3,000 to support emergency fund for rent, prescription, utilities, and other assistance for individuals and families in crisis

ICS Mobile Food Bank – \$3,000 to provide mobile food boxes to outlying communities

NSLC Blessings in a Backpack – \$7,000 to provide weekend food bags for 290 food insecure children from four east side elementary schools

NSLC Homeless Blessings – \$3,000 to provide nonperishable food, hygiene products, tarps, sleeping bags, and other items to homeless individuals on Tucson's east side



We are so blessed to have these funds to benefit the community! The next round of grant applications this year will be due December 15 and awarded in January 2023 after review. If you know of a worthy organization in need, please let one of the Endowment Board members know so we can reach out to them before the deadline.

Jenny Kwapich, Brenda Feller, Craig Geiger, Carol DeBis-Harrell, Cathy Cermak, and Pastor Carol Breimeier

CALL COMMITTEE FINISHES ITS WORK

On Tuesday, July 26, I, on behalf of the Call Committee, presented the name of Pastor Greg Hartman to the Church Council. After some lively and excited discussion, the council voted unanimously to recommend Pastor Hartman to the congregation. The council also approved the compensation package that had been worked out with him.



Again, I can't say enough about the commitment of the Call Committee. You all gave us this awesome responsibility to identify the best candidate to be our pastor, and, thanks to the committee's hard work and God's blessing, we were able to accomplish that task quickly and with a great result.

The congregational meeting to vote on calling Pastor Hartman is scheduled for Sunday, August 14, after worship. Voting members will receive official notification of the meeting by mail shortly.

There will also be two opportunities for a "meet and greet" informal meeting with Pastor Hartman before the vote: Wednesday, August 10, at 6:30pm on Zoom, and 9:30am on August 14, prior to worship.

We are excited about Pastor Hartman and hope the whole congregation will be too!

-Brigitte Stuetze, Call Committee Chairperson

HOW WE GREW IN GIVING

Thirty-seven years ago, when I joined what was then Spanish Trail Lutheran Church, I was an infant in terms of faith and spiritual growth. I started attending worship regularly and participated in many Bible studies and classes. I was hungry for spiritual growth and development. Needless to say, Pastor Mark Reitan and Lay Minister Peggy Drum were wonderful teachers, and God set me in the right place at the right time.

During one particularly difficult financial period at the church, Pastor Mark expressed feelings of defeat and despair during a council meeting. Despite the congregation's faithfulness in many areas, members just weren't grasping the spiritual lessons of giving. Several members of the church council who knew about Pastor Mark's and Peggy's generosity persuaded them to talk about their own giving. They were very modest but agreed to do so. I remembered just being blown away and inspired by their testimonies. Not only did they give more than 10% of their earning to the church, but they also contributed to many other ministries and organizations.

I longed to be faithful and obediently responsive to God's extravagant blessings in my life! Even though we had pledged \$25 per week at that point, how on earth were we going to contribute 10% of our income with all of our bills? It seemed like a huge mountain! We just didn't have the extra money to do that! I'll never forget when Vicki Denning, council president, gave her own testimony about how her young and growing family gradually came to tithe. She talked about percentage or incremental giving and increasing that percentage, by the month or year, until they got there. While this concept wasn't rocket science, I found it very freeing. We didn't have to arrive at fully tithing tomorrow! While it was our goal to tithe, we had permission to *grow* into tithing.

So we started off giving an extra \$10 per week, and you know what? We didn't miss that \$10! A few months later, we increased more each week. Again, we didn't miss it. In fact, we found that when we prioritized our giving, putting God first, rather than giving our leftovers, it worked for us! Within a couple of years, we were able to give 10% of our income. It felt so good to be faithful in our financial giving! We were even able to tithe from inheritances we had received. Not surprisingly, we discovered along the way that God was always faithful in God's many blessings, and we didn't lack for what we needed. To be clear, I'm not talking "prosperity religion." We just rearranged our priorities and lived on the rest of our income. We haven't lived extravagantly, but we've been comfortable enough.

Nor have we been perfect all the time. Sometimes we've allowed other spending to get in our way, and of course now that we're retired, our income is a bit less. We've had to make some adjustments, and every so often have had to remind ourselves of WHO comes first in our lives. In fact, I recently realized that our retirement income has actually increased a bit and that we hadn't increased our tithe accordingly. So we will be correcting that this month! God's faithful blessings have also enabled us to make modest gifts to the ELCA, Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest, and a couple of other ministries and causes. Through this journey of growing in giving, I am constantly reminded of several things: God is good, God is faithful, and God cares for me as he cares for the sparrows and the lilies of the field.



-Cathy Cermak

LUTHERAN ADVOCACY MINISTRY ARIZONA NEWS FOR AUGUST

The two main areas of concern for LAMAz this year have been hunger issues and civic engagement. Every month hunger advocacy groups have met to discuss hunger issues and how to address them. We have been involved in letter writing campaigns involving these issues.

The ELCA Advocacy group, during the current election year, is offering four sessions that address civic engagement. Each of the sessions offers a daytime as well as an evening session to offer information on the focus issues of the particular sessions. Both of the sessions are open to us via the LAMAz.org website.

The first session was held on Tuesday, July 26 at 10am and at 5pm. The emphasis was on the August recess of the US representatives as they return home to engage with their constituents.

The ELCA advocacy staff will discuss current issues where your voice matters.

The second session is on Tuesday, Aug. 30. The focus will be on Civic Engagement Actions. The third session focuses on barriers to voting. It will be held on Sept. 27. The fourth session features public discourse. This session will be held on Oct. 25.

Each of the sessions offers a 10am and a 5pm meeting for your convenience.

If you are interested in any or all of the sessions, you may access more detailed information on LAMA's website. You may also register to attend on the website. The area on the website to access more information and/or registration is titled the Advocacy Cafe.



I hope you have acquainted yourselves with LAMA's website over the past months of this year. Solveig Muus, our director of LAMAz, has worked tirelessly to bring these important issues to our attention.

Barb Verthein

August Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations

08/03 Craig & Renee Geiger
(anniversary)

08/04 Naida Granmo

08/16 Lis Schafer

08/17 Paul Hedstrom



08/19 Paul & Brigitte Stuetze
(anniversary)

08/20 Ted & LaSandra Matthews
(anniversary)

08/22 Paul Stuetze

08/26 Nancy Cunningham



BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Special thanks to Arizona Association of School Business Officials for their continued support. On July 21, 5 of our team members joined their volunteers at Starr Pass to pack 2000 snack packs, enough to supply almost 7 weeks of food for our schools. There are 68 tubs of food in Fellowship Hall, waiting to be distributed. After that, we picked up over 1600 pounds of food from Food Bank of Southern Arizona! Our Blessings Room is ready for the new school year. Our team is excited to be packing again.

SCHOOL WILL START ON AUGUST 4! The Blessings Team will begin deliveries the week of August 15.

Here at New Spirit, we feed **290** children from Erickson, Ford, Steele and Henry Elementary Schools, providing snack packs to take home on the weekend. Typical items include macaroni n' cheese box, canned sausages, chicken or tuna, oatmeal, canned beans or pasta, cereal, hot cocoa, canned vegetable, and fruit cup.

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.**

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, and delivery.**

Contact Laurie Bernard at lbernard2008@hotmail.com

"Like" our page on Facebook ***Blessings at New Spirit Lutheran Church***



HOMELESS BLESSINGS

A good hot meal is always welcome at our monthly event. During the summer, breakfast is served! Biscuits and gravy is always a favorite as are our egg casseroles. We are starting to see some new faces, and familiar ones coming back, as the word gets out. The Office of the Police Examiner, Hope, and Old Pueblo Community Services regularly attend to help any clients needing housing, intervention, or other help.

If you have clothing, shoes, socks, or blankets/sleeping bags, we sure would like you to drop them off at the church. We can always use monetary contributions to help pay for new underwear, hygiene products, flashlights, backpacks, batteries, and tarps.

IF YOU ARE A THRIVENT FINANCIAL MEMBER, PLEASE CONSIDER SPONSORING AN ACTION TEAM FOR HOMELESS BLESSINGS. WE WILL RECEIVE \$250 TO HELP TOWARDS THIS MINISTRY.

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.

THANK YOU FOR SUPPORTING THIS MISSION

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

Shout-Outs

SHOUT OUT - To the Call Committee for their hard work over the past months.



New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85710

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

<p>Sundays:</p> <p>10:00 am Worship</p> <p>You can currently watch each week's message on YouTube.</p>	<p><i>How to contact us:</i></p> <p>New Spirit Lutheran Church 8701 E. Old Spanish Trail Tucson, AZ 85710</p> <p>Phone: (520) 296-2461</p> <p>E-Mail: NewSpiritLutheranTucson@yahoo.com</p> <p>Website: newspiritlutherantucson.org</p>
---	---