

# 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.*

August 2023

Good People of New Spirit,

There is change in the air, by the time you read this we have hopefully fully entered monsoon season. Young people are returning to school. There is also change happening within the church. We have spoken about the change that has happened and will continue to happen at New Spirit. So today I would like to share a little about the change happening in the larger church.

For those that don't know at the 2022 ELCA Churchwide Assembly, those gathered considered a memorial to create a commission that would examine how the church operates, the future of the ELCA, and more. The Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church (CRLC) was created through the memorial that multiple synods had submitted to the churchwide gathering.

The CRLC is comprised of 35 individuals from throughout the ELCA. It is made up of more laity than rostered ministers. There are bishops, pastors, assistants to bishops, and deacons on the commission. This group of 35 had their first meeting July 13-15, where they discussed the task ahead of them and how they would begin to tackle it. During this initial meeting the commission agreed that there is nothing regarding how the church is structured, organized, maintained, or operated that is "off the table". They will be doing all this work with an aim to make suggestions of how the church needs to change to better serve all people in the current context.

For the rest of 2023 they will be listening, they will be asking questions, they will be studying. They will be taking the time to learn as much as they can before beginning the work put before them. Among my colleagues there has already been concern voiced about the pace the committee is taking. Many of my colleagues want the commission to rush through this listening phase and get to the action phase. If you think about it 6 months of listening before starting to craft suggestions for changes for a national denomination is not much time, yet there are people that want to skip this work. The reasons for this urge are many and many are valid. Some of the reasons I have heard are "we all know what needs to be done" or "we don't have time to listen" or "there's rostered ministers on the commission so they should already know all they need to know". Sound familiar? To be honest, I at times have found myself thinking similar thoughts, and I must remind myself of a phrase that I heard in seminary far too often "trust the process". In fact, my former bishop when Bishop Hutterer spoke to him said "you have to remind Greg to slow down".

Trusting the process can be frustrating at times. Trusting the process can be painful. Trusting the process is often the last thing we want to do. We want to rush to the end. We want to cut corners to get to a conclusion. We want to get past the not knowing what is coming and get to the result. Yet, the Holy Spirit often works in and through the process. The Holy Spirit steps into the process and can redirect us and our efforts. Maybe that is why we want to rush the process. If we rush the process, that gives less opportunity for the Holy Spirit to show up and change too much.

Society is changing and so is the church. Let us pray for those that are serving on the Commission for a Renewed Lutheran Church. Let us pray for our congregation and all congregations that are trying to change to meet the needs of the here and now.

Pastor Hartman



## August Monthly Prayer

God of the flowing river, sometimes we wish change would happen quicker and sometimes we want to avoid change at any cost. Give us courage to face the changes that you are calling us to make. Spend your spirit to lead us to where we need to be both at New Spirit Lutheran and as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. When we need to act swiftly give us the ability to do so. When we need to slow down help us to do so. Amen



## CELEBRATE GIVING

The Endowment Board awarded grants to eight organizations in July! Even though we weren't able to fully fund the \$68,842 total requests of these agencies, we were still able to provide \$41,636 in funding! The number and amount of grant requests is evidence of the great need in Arizona and beyond! It is amazing how God has enabled New Spirit to bless so many worthy organizations and their incredible work! Here is the breakdown of the organizations, their work and what we were able to fund:

Organization	Amount Funded	Focus/Purpose
Hope Mountain Foundation Cebu, Philippines	\$8,000	Provides residential care for siblings, ages 2-17, who have been victims of online sexual abuse and exploitation (OSEC). The children receive counseling, medical care, education, vocational training, and Biblical discipleship. In this safe environment, they are able to heal and thrive. Funding helps support their operations.
St. Luke's Home	\$5,000	Provides assisted living for low-income elderly. Funding offsets increasing operational and staffing costs.
Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest	\$5,042	Funding will support their Refugee & Immigrant Services: work shoes and boots, incentive gifts for mentorship and job readiness graduates, and hygiene and cleaning products.
Casa de los Ninos	\$5,094	Funding will cover parent education costs for 40 parents.
Interfaith Community Services	\$6,000	\$3,000 each for their Emergency Financial Assistance and Mobile Meals program.
Boys to Men Tucson	\$5,000	Site-based program that provides mentorship to boys and young men, ages 13-24. Funding will allow the program to expand its sites and number of youth served.
Jewish Family Services of Tucson	\$5,000	Funding will support their Refugee Resettlement Program by providing hygiene, cleaning products and Fry's & Walmart gift cards to 120 refugees.
Feed My Starving Children	\$2,500	Funding to purchase ingredients for Manna packs for 14 kids (5,172 meals)

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Hope Mountain Center Foundation is a new grant recipient for New Spirit, so I'd like to share a bit more information. They are doing such wonderful and compassionate work to help child victims of sexual abuse and exploitation heal. Many times siblings from the same family are the victims of sexual abuse, and Hope Mountain Center is the only organization in the Philippines that is able to take in siblings, both male and female, and provide them with a safe, nurturing and spiritual environment.

Here's a recent message and picture from their director, who, by the way, completely volunteers his time!

"The ministry of Hope Mountain Center is truly blessed.

This week, 2 of our children graduated from 6<sup>th</sup> grade and will be moving up to Junior High School. One of the others graduated from 10<sup>th</sup> grade and will be moving up to Senior High School. The other children enrolled in the school all successfully moved up to their next grade level. Here is a picture taken which shows most of the Hope Mountain Children. I wish we could show you their faces, but we cannot to protect their identities.



We finished construction of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Aftercare Home this month. We are still coordinating with the Municipal Engineer for the Certificate of Occupancy before we are able to use the home."

Our partnership with Hope Mountain Center enables New Spirit Endowment dollars to reach across the ocean, impact the lives of children in a significant and meaningful way, and facilitate discipleship building!

Endowment Board

### CREATIVITY NEEDED!!!!



If you are a creative mind, looking to utilize your skills for the growth of New Spirit, we want you! As we look to continue our growth efforts, we'd like to design "Connect Cards" that allow us to invite people we know and meet within the community to come and see all that we are doing. Please let Pastor Hartman or Jenny Kwapich know if this excites you!



**We have CLEANERS!!!** The Church Council approved hiring Busy Bees as our new custodians. They will provide weekly cleaning and on-call services as needed and requested. If you see an area that needs attention or have questions or concerns, please let anyone on the council know and/or leave a note for Nancy to relay.



## We All Have a Need to Give By Cathy Cermak

I'd like you to think back and consider: Who is the most generous person you have ever known? What, if any, were special characteristics they possessed? What did you admire about them?

Now think back to the first financial gift you remember ever giving. To whom did you give it, how much was it, and why did you choose to make this gift? How did you feel about giving this gift? Did you experience joy and a sense of being part of something bigger than yourself?

Believe it or not, giving and living generously are spiritual and psychological needs every human, and especially every Christian has. The reality is that the more we clutch and hoard life and don't share our gifts, the more we lose, the more our lives are diminished. Jesus said this in Matthew 16:25: "Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it." You can't receive God's gifts with clenched fists, only with open hands. Open hands go both ways – giving and receiving.

Like a coin, Christian giving has two sides. Unfortunately we usually focus on the side called, "The Need of the Church," rather than concentrating on "My Need to Give." God's church will flourish, no matter what. But the church invites us to be vital partners in proclaiming the life-transforming and liberating good news to everyone. It invites us to participate in meaningful ministries that reach the lost and forgotten. At New Spirit we have a lot to be joyful about. Not only are we the recipients of God's immense love, grace, and mercy, we are blessed with vibrant ministries and opportunities to make significant differences in people's lives.

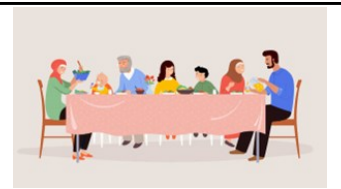
Giving is an integral part of spiritual life and growth. To give is to live!

(Adapted and used with permission from Six Steps to Joyful Giving by Dr. Robert B. Gronlund.)



Our Witness and Welcome team has committed to partnering with 3 other ELCA churches to participate in the Tucson Pride event this year. There will be planning meetings to come. If you would like to be part of this either in the planning stages or out in our community sharing the love of Jesus, please let any of us on the team know.

Our monthly dinners are in full swing, however, we still need individuals and/or teams to coordinate dinner meal themes (Mexican food, BBQ, etc.). We are looking for volunteers for the August 15 and September 19 dinners. Please let Pastor Hartman or Jenny Kwapich know if you are interested!



**Faith Stories....** Have you taken the time to share your faith story? Faith stories can be a very personal subject, but they also have the ability to touch someone's life. They can encourage others in ways we don't even realize. Would you be willing to share how Jesus has changed YOUR life?

Church  
Council



The Church Council is continuing to focus on the established goals set forth for New Spirit and strategic plans to achieve them!

We are beginning discussions about upcoming vacancies within the Council as 2024 quickly approaches. If you feel a desire or call to look at joining our Church Council, please let Jenny Kwapich know of your interest. We will have multiple vacancies to fill in the coming year.

We continue to ask each of you to look for ways to get involved... join discussion groups, working and planning groups, prayer groups and more! It takes ALL OF US to grow and share the love of Jesus!

Please continue to pray for our New Spirit and Council leadership.

# what's happening

## from the Witness & Welcome Team

(Jeremy Kwapich, Jenny Kwapich, Craig Geiger,  
Joyce Dow, Diane Schreiner, Brigitte Stuetze, Paul Stuetze, and Pastor Hartman)



New Sign update: Have you seen the sign? The foundation is built. The electronic panels are up, and the new panel with our name is in place. We are trucking along nicely!

If you have ideas on how to continue to reach others within the surrounding Tucson community, please let us know!

Do you have questions about our WELCOME STATEMENT? Are you curious as to what everything we state actually means? In an effort to confirm our welcome statement to be one that includes ALL people, the Council plans to hold 2 small group adult forums on Sundays, 9/17/23 and 9/24/23, after worship. We encourage everyone to attend and participate!



## August Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations

08/03 Craig & Renee Geiger  
(anniversary)

08/19 Paul & Brigitte Stuetze  
(anniversary)

08/20 Ted & LaSandra Matthews  
(anniversary)

08/04 Naida Granmo

08/22 Paul Stuetze

08/16 Lis Schafer

08/24 Becky Schmidt

08/17 Paul Hedstrom

08/29 Rina Morales Begody



ELCA Advocacy

## ACTION ALERT



### Urge Congress to Reauthorize the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)

Twenty years ago, when President George W. Bush launched the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), testing positive for HIV was a death sentence for many people in low-income countries. PEPFAR is the largest U.S. global health program devoted to a single disease. Today, PEPFAR supports over 20 million people around the world by providing care and lifesaving HIV treatment. Because of PEPFAR, millions of babies born to mothers living with HIV are born HIV-free.

The current congressional authorization for PEPFAR expires this year on September 30. Congress needs to pass legislation to reauthorize continuation of the program. The U.S. government must uphold its commitment to eradicate HIV by extending PEPFAR's mandate so that those currently receiving care will continue to receive support, and so that PEPFAR is enabled to build on its great success and expand access to others who still lack access to care and treatment.

Our faith teaches us to love God and love our neighbors. ELCA social teaching reminds us that caring for the health of others is everyone's responsibility. *Caring for Health: Our Shared Endeavor*, an ELCA social statement, says: "Responding to those who were sick was integral to the life and ministry of Jesus and has been a central aspect of the Church's mission throughout its history" (p. 1). We exemplify God's love when we serve our neighbors and advocate for the wellbeing of all, especially those on the margins of society.

Please ask your representative to support this important legislation using the [ELCA Action Center](#).  
[Email Today](#)



We are collecting peanut butter through the end of July for the annual ICS Peanut Butter Party drive. Our goal was set for 210 or more! As of July 24, we have collected 284 jars.

We have exceeded our goal and would like to continue adding to our number! Donations can be brought by the church office Monday – Thursday 8am – 3pm or on Sundays during worship through August 1. Are you out of state? No problem! You can order online and have them shipped directly to the church too! We appreciate your efforts in advance!

What does stewardship mean? It's a term that usually applies to taking care of something. God put us in charge of taking care of the his creation. Admittedly we haven't done such a good job with that. And he/she has also guided all the different religious entities in the world who have shared the good news of having sent their son, Jesus, to redeem the world. Since that time churches have come and gone.

We here at NSLC are one of them. Our responsibility has not changed. We need to tell the world how God is working in our lives, the love he has for all peoples and how Jesus is our role model on how to show that love!

I love how we rally to support activities such as getting peanut butter to ICS, shoe drive for children, BIB and Homeless blessings.



I want us to have that same intensity of giving for the functions of NSLC, such as staff salaries, utilities and all other kinds of upkeep. When it's that time of year when you are asked about what your intent of giving is regarding NSLC, may you let God guide that decision.



# BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Who will feed the kids this weekend?



## \$14,500 IN-KIND AND CASH DURING THE AASBO CONFERENCE!

Our count is now 325 from Erickson, Ford, Steele and Henry Elementary Schools, providing snack packs to take home on the weekend. Arizona Association of School Business Officials has sponsored our outreach for 5 years, helping us feed our kids an equivalent of 1 full year of snack packs. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONTINUING SUPPORT!

Did you know that New Spirit's program also provides as needed items to the schools such as underwear, socks, and pants to each school closet? We are holding a new and/or gently used children's shoe drive July 1st to August 31st. Typical shoe sizes are 12-13 (Children's) and 1Y to 5Y (Youth). If you would rather contribute funds to help buy them, please make your check payable to New Spirit with a memo note "BIB SHOES".



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](mailto:lbernard2008@hotmail.com) with questions.

. THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THIS MINISTRY



## HOMELESS BLESSINGS

JOIN US THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
MAY THRU SEPTEMBER 9AM TO 11AM

SOME PETS ARE HOMELESS TOO  
WE NOW COLLECT DOG/CAT FOOD, OLD TOWELS, AND BEDDING FOR OUR CLIENTS AND FOR DONATION  
TO THE PIMA ANIMAL CARE CENTER

### FOOD INSECURITY AFFECTS ALL AGES

***Our next event is August 12<sup>th</sup>.*** In addition to our monthly Saturday events, we hand out bags to clients on the street that include food, batteries, socks, and hygiene products.

New Spirit is reaching at least 100 people every month with our events and hand out bags. Coming soon.....showers - thanks to the City of Tucson's new mobile unit!

***IF YOU ARE A THRIVENT FINANCIAL MEMBER, PLEASE CONSIDER SPONSORING AN ACTION TEAM FOR HOMELESS BLESSINGS. WE WILL RECEIVE \$250 TO HELP TOWARD 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. 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](mailto:lbernard2008@hotmail.com)



# New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85710



## Shout-Outs



***SHOUT OUT - To Cathy Cermak and Lorrie Firth for all their work over the next several months relating to Stewardship for All Seasons.***

***SHOUT OUT - To Lorrie Firth and the Budget and Finance team for their efforts in taking on the role of obtaining vendor quotes and proposing recommendations to the council.***

***SHOUT OUT - To the Council for their continued work and efforts to meet our goals.***

***SHOUT OUT - To Jeremy Kwapich for his work seeing the sign project come toward completion.***

***SHOUT OUT - To all team leaders who have worked towards streamlining our processes and procedures.***

***SHOUT OUT - To all our volunteers who give of themselves to share the love of Jesus.***

Please submit words of thanks and praise to Nancy at [nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto:nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org) to be placed in the newsletter by the 15th of each month. 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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