

# *That's The Spirit!*

Rev. Alan Field

New Spirit Lutheran Church

December 2017

*Our faith is in Jesus.*

*Our hope is in grace.*

*Our strength is in love.*

Dear Partners in the Gospel,

Now we begin to wait. We will wait and watch and wish. We wait for the prophets' ancient words of hope that God would intervene in human history wracked by war and terror. We will watch for signs of change, that the old ways of privilege and power will give way to more just and righteous living among the leaders we have chosen. We will surely hear more stories from more women and men of abuse, of lies, disappointing and terribly hurtful. And we will wish for a land that has fewer deaths from gun violence. And we will wish for better paying jobs for more of our citizens. And we will wait for the promises made by politicians for a better life, and we will take a stand if those promises turn out to be manipulative lies. We will wait, like we have waited for decades, for the Prince of Peace, the Mighty Counselor, the Lord of Life to become real and vibrant in all the world.

This year there is an odd spirit among us. It is a spirit of resignation, and it seems we are accepting more and more poor performance and expecting less in return. Immigrants are being robbed of their dignity as human beings, and being treated like they are less than human. The dream of economic stability is escaping many young families. Drug companies are raising prices on generic drugs to maximize profits while threatening the lives of millions of people who rely on those medications. Legislative manipulations will protect the very wealthy at the cost of seniors, laborers, service industry workers, entry level employees, and lower management positions. While the prophet Amos called for "justice to roll down like a mighty river" the economic reality will prove again that gravity has no power on the accumulation of wealth. There is no trickling down, never has been, and never will until the hearts of God's people are changed.

This is Advent. It is not a brief season to decorate the house, and invite friends over for cocktails and appetizers. Advent is the season in which people of faith hold the headlines of internet news services up to the dimming light of day. Advent is the season in which people of faith consider, again and again, the call of God to take a stand with our daily lives. Advent is the time to look in on elderly neighbors, and welcome the new neighbors you've not met. It is the season to bless those whose lives will become horribly busy. Advent is a season where we are encouraged to breathe, to consider how peace on earth could feel. Advent is a season of waiting, but it is not a season to do nothing. This is the season when we prepare our hearts and minds for the creative love that spoke into existence all that is....to become flesh, and dwell among us. Peace is the promise. Hope is the road we travel. Love is the power to light the lights, and draw us as brothers and sisters together in the Body of Christ....whose coming we await.

It is Advent.

Faithfully,

**Pastor Alan**



**New Spirit's new website.** At the November Church Council meeting we voted to engage with TagLine Media to develop a workable website. Over the years we have had volunteers put websites together, but because of platforms and volunteer entries, the sites rapidly were out of date. Our new site will be integrated with the church newsletter and calendar to automatically keep the site updated.

Soon we will be asking for people to be trained by TagLine personnel to operate, and update the website. If you would like to be trained to help keep the church's social media presence up to date, please let Brigitte Stuetze, Susan Armstrong, or Pastor Alan know.

### **Supporting New Spirit Youth**

Following the **Congregation Annual Meeting on December 10<sup>th</sup>**, there will be a **Chili Dinner** sponsored as a **Thrivent Action Team Event** to raise funds for the youth who will be attending the **ELCA National Youth Gathering, "Grace: This Changes Everything," in Houston, Texas , June 27-July 3.**

The youth, their parents, and Thrivent Members will be serving home-made chili and cornbread.

Your generosity will make their once-in-a-lifetime experience unforgettable!

### **Advent Midweek Services**

***"Hark the Glad Sound"*** is the theme of our Midweek Advent services. The services will begin at **6:15 p.m. on Wednesday evenings just following supper.**

We will hear the promises of God of the coming of the Messiah. We will prayerfully consider where the Spirit is dwelling within us while calling us to faithfulness and hope.

On **December 6<sup>th</sup>** we will celebrate the **"Hanging of the Greens Service"** and decorate the Sanctuary with tree, garlands, and the crèche. Help will be needed to "fluff the tree and garlands" before they are put up.

On **December 13<sup>th</sup>** there will be a Service of Prayer for Healing as part of our gathering. People will be invited to come to the communion rail for laying on of hands and prayers for healing.

On **December 20<sup>th</sup>** we will consider the light of Christ that seeks to illumine the world.

### **Teams need to arise**

As we look to a new calendar year, several areas of our ministry need plans and events to arise. Sunday morning worship is but a part of a church's life. It is not our entire ministry. We need to tell God's story through our story. We need to deepen the roots of faith in many adults. We need to commit ourselves to those in need. We need to serve others as teachers, welcomers, ushers, and singers. Every member of New Spirit needs to be committed to at least one role of planning, serving and leadership.

### **Christmas Eve Schedule**

Christmas Eve is on Sunday this year. This happens about every 9-11 years, depending on Leap Years along the way.

What we know is that people who come to Sunday morning worship on the 24<sup>th</sup> may not return for an evening service. Surely that would be true if we held a 4:00 p.m. service.

New Spirit will hold two services on Christmas Eve:

At **10:00 a.m.** we will gather for Advent 4 and Christmas Eve. The Praise Team will lead that **communion service**, which will begin as an Advent service, and end with the Christmas Eve celebration.

**7:00 pm Candlelight Carol Service.** That service will be a very Traditional Service of Carols and Candlelight. We expect to welcome many people from the neighborhood for that celebration. There will be no Communion at this service.

**Sunday after Christmas,** December 31<sup>st</sup> will also be a 10:00 am Traditions Service. This will be a Communion Service with carols and a dedicating 2017 into God's care.

**Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>** will be the **Baptism of Our Lord** at both services with the remembrance of our baptism at each service.

### **K-Hall Upgrade Project**

K-Hall is a 40+ year old building built by the members of Spanish Trail Lutheran Church in the early 1970's. It has been swamp-cooled all those years, with very little insulation in its walls or ceilings.

Over the past 12 years, K-Hall has become a social ministry center with the Community Food Bank and Inter-faith Community Services resource center housed there.

Six years ago, we began a process to investigate refurbishing the building, basically gutting it and designing a more usable floor plan, up-grading lighting, insulation, and cooling-heating systems.

With the number of deaths we have experienced in that time our financial base was drastically cut. We continue to hope that one day we will be able to contract for the K-Hall Remodeling Project.

In the meantime, the summer heat makes working in K-Hall horrible, especially in the Monsoon Season.

A project has been submitted, and will be presented at the Annual Meeting to install three a/c units on the K-Hall roof before the warm weather returns in April.

This project is a stop-gap project and the new system will be incorporated in the master-plan when we take that step.

### **Year End Giving**

To receive credit for your 2017 tithes and offerings your final check needs to be received by the church office no later than December 31<sup>st</sup>, so we can close our financial books on January 7<sup>th</sup>.

### **Will you have new goals for 2018?**

Psychologists tell us that people who set goals for themselves, taking on new activities, actually doing something they have meant to do for years; focusing on a future date for an accomplishment (i.e. finishing that book, losing that weight, learning to play that new song on guitar or piano, flute, or violin), are actually happier and more hopeful than those who dwell on the ails of the world.

We live in interesting times.....and what the future holds for us will happen if we plan for it or not. I believe the church that takes a pro-active stance in terms of deepening faith, rounding out experiences, and intentionally seeking to welcome people into the fellowship of New Spirit will hold benefits for years to come. There was a time in our history when those things mattered. That is why the Council sends a Venture Budget to you. That is why teams need to function.

Doctors agree that personal health goals are a positive way to addressing chronic health issues, getting healthier and preventing things like injury from falls.

What goals do you have for 2018?

### **11:00 Service liturgy change!**

The Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) has ten settings for the Holy Communion. We used the Summer months to introduce Setting 8. This Fall we have used Setting 4, a familiar setting known as Setting 2 in the green LBW. Beginning in Advent we will be using Setting 3, similar to the 1<sup>st</sup> Setting in the green LBW. We will shift again, for sure in Lent, but possibly in Epiphany. We'll see how the change goes.

**Happy 16<sup>th</sup> Birthday!!!** If they were teenagers, they would be able to drive!!! But, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent is the 16<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Praise Team and the Arise to Praise Service.

In the months following my arrival, I identified a deep desire among the members of Spanish Trail (New Spirit) to offer an alternative worship experience. Our first services were testy, attendance pretty low, but since then the Team has learned and led over 200 songs, including a number of originals written by Mark Buglewicz and Harry Bolin. We are even working on a Renee Geiger composition!

The 9:00 service is centered in the Gospel, and contains Conversations and Communion preparations that are unique to each Sunday's readings. Not many churches in the ELCA have such a rich and varied opportunity for Sunday morning worship.

So, thank you to the Praise Team members who have dedicated no less than 3 hours every week to rehearsal to lead the 9:00 service. It is your 16<sup>th</sup> birthday!!!



### BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Looking for a gift for someone for Christmas? Give the gift of food for the weekend to a child who will otherwise go hungry. Your tax deductible contribution of \$100 will feed a child every weekend during the school year.

God is working through New Spirit and making a difference in our community and the lives of **222** children and their families.

For regular contributions, please make your tax deductible check out 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](mailto:lbernard2008@hotmail.com)

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

### HOMELESS BLESSINGS

The weather is getting colder. We need blankets, coats, sweatshirts and other warm clothing to share.



Want to help? Contact NSLC Office or Laurie Bernard at 886-3242 or [lbernard2008@hotmail.com](mailto:lbernard2008@hotmail.com)

#### PLEASE DONATE:

**MEN'S AND WOMEN'S CLOTHING**

**SHOES AND SOCKS**

**AA AND AAA BATTERIES**

**TOWELS AND WASHCLOTHS**

**FULL SIZE SHAMPOO, LOTION, TOOTHPASTE, DEODORANT**

**RAZORS, COMBS, BRUSHES**

**PEANUT BUTTER, CANNED MEATS**

**PROTEIN DRINKS**



## December Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations



12/4 Carol Brennan  
R.J. Friend  
Allan Wedemeier

12/15 Amber Uidenich

12/26 Linda Lamb

12/6 Joel & Barbara Carty  
(Anniversary)

12/19 Carol Morales

12/27 Laurie Bernard

12/9 Sandra Johnsen

12/20 Marilyn Carter

12/30 Don Austin  
Eva Kwapich  
Sarah Elmquist,  
Ethan Rettig

12/12 Joyce Dow

**Deborah's Gathering Women's Bible study** met in November and our study was the third article of the Creed. The discussions were on what we believe about the Holy Spirit, how the Holy Spirit keeps us in our faith, and how we feel about the Holy Spirit being with us in our life, unseen but felt. Our hymn for the day was Spirit of Gentleness. The Bible tells us that in the beginning, the Spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. Special Christmas cards designed by Joyce Dow and put together by the women at the meeting, were signed and will be mailed to the women who are unable to come to meetings. We collect an offering each time, 1/2 of which goes to Synod Women and the other half stays with the gathering. We also collect money for our projects that the Gathering does within our church such as the backpacks. Money and the box tops for education go to the Navajo Mission School. They get money from a company called BOX TOPS FOR EDUCATION! You can collect them and put them in the proper container under the shelf in the Narthex. Please note that they have an expiration date on them. We also do a project in another country such as money for mosquito nets. Gloria brought a picture that most people have never seen. It had been on a Christmas card and was a picture of Joseph holding the baby Jesus!

The Gather Magazine has a lesson each month to use in our study but it also has many good articles for women to read. Some back issues are on the Welcome table in the Narthex. Thank you to the women who donated to the Thanks-giving offering. The bulletin for that day explained how the Thank offering was started many years ago when women kept a little box in their home and added money to it as their Thanks for their blessings. All the women are invited to join us at our meetings the second Wednesday of each month at 3:15 and then you can go to Wednesday night supper and studies. The December meeting will be December 13 in room 105 at 3:15. We will have songs, readings and other stories about Christmas. Please join us!

If you want more information, speak with Joyce Dow or Gloria Burke.

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**THRIVENT**-We will be doing a Thrivent Action Team event for the Chili supper to raise money to send the Youth to their Gathering in Houston next year. Thrivent provides seed money to purchase food for the Event and some for the Fund raising. We used to have to vote for local officers but do not have those chapters anymore. As a result, we do not have a good list of Thrivent members. We need more people to do Action Team events for New Spirit projects and community projects. IF YOU ARE A THRIVENT MEMBER, PLEASE TALK WITH GLORIA BURKE SO WE CAN GET A GOOD LIST FOR NEW SPIRIT.

YOU MAY BE MISSING OUT ON GETTING INVITED TO SOME OF THE EVENTS. Some of us were at the Building Foundations Luncheon for Lutheran Social Services of the Southwest last week. We heard many stories of the help that has been given to individuals and families. Services provided are for the aging and disabled, children and families, emergency hunger relief and help for the homeless and refugees and immigrants. \$98,000 was raised to help with these much needed services now and in the future!

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New Medicare cards will be coming starting next year. They will make it harder to steal your ID. AARP warns not to give out your Social Security Number or Bank Information. SCAMMERS are already at work.

Hang up if you are called for the above information. Medicare will never call to ask for such information.

## The Practice of Meditation for December

The last of the Spiritual Practices for this year is the practice of meditation. The past two “spiritual adventures” of prayer and devotions quite naturally bring us to continuing our encounter with God’s presence and love.

AND SO THE  
*Adventure*  
BEGINS

Our lives consist of the choices that we make. Setting aside time to *experience* relationship with God is counter-cultural, and that makes it so difficult. Doing and producing are the norm until we are exhausted, and we miss the undercurrent of the meaning of it all.

Forms and practices of meditation have been explained well in scores of books. My problem is that I have read a lot of books, but when it comes down to **being still and quiet**, I really have a rough time. For one, my mind is just running too fast and I wonder if I can tame those wild horses. Also, meditation is a humbling and vulnerable place, where we open ourselves to the mystery of God within.

Ninety-eight percent of our thoughts are repetitive and useless. When we go into the stillness, we take the lid off of our subconscious, and get a pretty good view of our unhealed stuff, our ego, our need to control. Our only task is to just sit with those thoughts, honor them, however difficult they may be, and then let them go. There is no judgment, no black and white thinking, just being still in the loving presence of God. In this process we are waiting and desiring to be filled with new vision and love.

Another study reveals that our minds can only process in two directions: the past where we rerun experiences over and over or the future with our fears or expectations. And so, it is in this place called “**now**” that God can more easily get through to us. We get out of the way. We are simply present. We do not need words.

In rabbinical teaching concerning the third commandment: “Thou shall not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,” the teaching is that we should not speak God’s name with emptiness or even speak the name of God aloud. It is a form of cosmic humility. God is not an object of the intellect, but mystery. It is interesting that in Hebrew, there are only consonants, not vowels. And the consonants used in *Yahweh* (God in Hebrew) cannot use the tongue or allow us to close our lips when spoken. All we can do is breath the name of God, ultimately, living into that breath.

Thank God, this is not an arduous moral achievement, but a priceless gift. We remember this especially this Advent and Christmas season. Jesus’ first cry was the breath of God and his last. And so it is with each of us. We breathe and live this mystery, this life in the world.

Renee Geiger

Renee Geiger, Member at Large on Church Council

I was born in Richmond, California. My father was a Lutheran Pastor and my uncle a bishop, so clergy runs in our family.

As an English major, I attended California Lutheran University. It was at CLU that I met Craig. We married in 1968 and then drove to St. Paul with our little U-Haul for Craig to attend Luther Seminary, while I taught third grade. It was our first experience of a real winter.

In 1984 I began my studies at Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary in Berkley, CA. In 1988, I was ordained and called to Reformation Lutheran in Milpitas, CA, followed by Marin Lutheran in Milpitas, CA. and Faith Lutheran in Phoenix, AZ.

Craig and I have two daughters, Kimberly and Andrea and they each have a son, Mason, 14 and Jackson, 15. They’ll be with us for Christmas!!

I love to read and write poetry. I also enjoy theological reflection.

### **Prayer shawl ministry**

This ministry was alive but faltering over the last few years. Under its umbrella we started the 24 Hour project where we are knitting/crocheting hats for babies for Africa to prevent heat loss right after birth. We do not meet formally any more. We have patterns, if this is something that interests you. We can also use baby yarn for those of us knitting.

I just delivered 510 hats to Streams in the Desert. Hats are gathered and then mailed after a certain amount is on hand.

We do have a few prayer shawls available so if you know of someone who could use some comfort, let me know. If there are some of you who want to continue this ministry, also talk to me.

Brigitte Stuetze, Church Council President

### **Altar Care Request**

We have heard from some that they prefer to receive Holy Communion via glasses or chalice cups. If you are requesting that, are you willing to volunteer for Altar Care service?

For decades washing communion cups and glasses has been a labor intensive service done by Altar Care volunteers.

The number of members volunteering for Altar Care is very low at New Spirit. There are no Altar Care team members who worship at the 11:00 service. That means the monthly duty team members must return to church after the late service to wash cups.

You can contact Bob Daliege, Altar Care coordinator to volunteer.



### **ADOPT A FAMILY**

God is constantly putting opportunities in front of us. It's up to us to notice and act. A couple weeks ago, Phil and I were talking about a dining room table and chairs I've had stored in my mom's storage room for months. We needed to do something with it. Not 5 minutes later, while checking my Facebook, a plea posted by a single mother of 5 for a dining room set caught my eye. Crystal was desperate for her children not to have to sit on the floor to eat. I contacted her and we delivered it to her within a couple of days.

After hearing her story of leaving a 17-year abusive relationship with nothing but her bed, we knew that God had put this family in our path to make a difference.

Please help us in providing much needed new or gently used items, including beds, dressers, kitchen items, linens, living room furniture, and clothing. You will find a list on the Narthex board. Together, we can make a difference.

If you have any questions, please see Laurie Bernard or Philip Pierce.

**Congratulations** to Laurie Bernard for being named to the National Board of Blessings in a Backpack. Laurie has shouldered New Spirit's outreach thru Blessings along with Cathy Cremak, for years.



# New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85710

## Shout-Outs

***SHOUT OUT-*** Don Austin & Steve Lamb our Sunday Tech's

***SHOUT OUT -*** Terry Wolfe, Our most awesome treasurer and the stewardship team for developing our budget

***SHOUT OUT -*** Jay Schreiber for sharing his talent during communion

***SHOUT OUT -*** Praise Team for their gift of time

***SHOUT OUT -*** John Lukehart for finding a spot for the Luther Rose made by Sunday School.

***SHOUT OUT -*** Our November cook team, Cathy Cermak, LaSandra Matthews and Susan Armstrong. Delicious dinners!

***SHOUT OUT -*** Sharon Dobbs, for her dedication on overseeing our designated funds.

***SHOUT OUT -*** Our current council for their leadership this year.

***SHOUT OUT -*** Laurie Bernard for being invited to be on the board of the National Blessings in a Backpack.



### 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

### How to contact us:

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