

# That's The Spirit!

Rev. Carol Breimeier  
Rev. Fred Nelson

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

December 2020

## **FOR THE LOVE OF NEIGHBOR, WE WAIT**

Bishop Deborah Hutterer  
December 7, 2020

"I wait for the Lord, my soul waits,  
and in his word I hope;  
my soul waits for the Lord  
more than those who watch for the morning,  
more than those who watch for the morning." ~Psalm 130:5-6



Dear Church,

Earlier this year, our synod experienced a horrifying spike of coronavirus infections two weeks after Memorial Day gatherings which continued to grow before finally peaking in mid-July.

Now we are living in the two-week spike after Thanksgiving. Throughout Arizona, Nevada, and Utah, new cases are higher and staying high. The new spike is growing. As I write this, each weekday regularly reports another 2,000 coronavirus deaths across the United States. Covid-19 is now the third leading cause of death in our synod and nation. As one epidemiologist put it, our holiday gatherings are creating "surges on top of surges."

As followers of Jesus, we are called to love God and love our neighbor. We are called to honor God's creation and the gift of life. This season, we can do that by limiting our gatherings, which are the most direct cause of coronavirus transmission.

We do have the good news that people are far less likely to die of Covid than those infected earlier this year. Improved knowledge and treatments have dropped the mortality rate.

But those infected are a drain on the medical system, and, with hospitals nearing capacity in our synod, it is an act of love to keep Covid cases low. We need to do all we can to keep hospital beds open and bring relief to medical staff, who are far beyond their breaking point.

In this Advent season, many of us have been waiting to decide how to gather as families, as friends, as congregations. These decisions take a deep emotional toll. The need for gathering has never been more real or needed. Yet how do we justify an action that may exacerbate our grief and suffering?

We must do what we can to minimize gatherings, even when that seems to be a sacrifice. A few months ago, the Office of the Bishop staff committed to no in-person gatherings, either at our office or at congregations, through the rest of 2020. We will re-evaluate this decision in January. Our synod council just committed to an online assembly in June 2021. We find ways to continue and be creative with public health in mind.

This year of pandemic is causing tears in our social fabric. In many ways, it has already been torn. I hear, more and more frequently, heartbreaking stories of suffering and stress from the pastors and leaders of our synod.

Cont'd on page 2

Just this morning, at our daily Zoom staff check-in, we hit one of those breaking points. Many of the synod staff reported specific and general feelings of sorrow, grief, loss, and pain.

One member shared the crisis point their family household has reached, as the pressure of months of at-home work and schooling continues to build.

Another synod staffer reported the fifth death in their extended family since the pandemic, both Covid and non-Covid. Once again, the family faces the many agonizing decisions of how to grieve when there was no agreement on how to gather safely.

A third member of our team said they may need to leave the call early, as they were caregiving for a family member, and a pastor was about to visit. This team member described the elaborate preparations to receive communion safely—the family's first communion since March—and what very well could be a final communion for the beloved person receiving palliative care at home. The visiting pastor will deliver communion through a window.

As we shared these stories, it was clear we could not continue with business as usual. We stopped for a time of silence. We cried. We breathed. We prayed. We prayed for the arms of a loving God to surround us. We gave thanks for a God who loves us so much as to become flesh to live among us. We named those in need of God's love. Scattered geographically, we were one in the body of Christ.

May Jesus find you as you wait at the window this Advent season.

May you find Christ when you are there for people in new and unknown ways.

May we dwell in the story of Jesus' birth in new ways, remembering the small intimacy of that night and the gathering of a family of three. May we be as surprised and astonished as the shepherds in the fields.

As you sacrifice for the love of neighbor, may you know you do so for the sake of Jesus, who comes to us as surely as the world turns to a new dawn.

Waiting with you,

The Rev. Deborah K. Hutterer  
Bishop  
Grand Canyon Synod of the ELCA

## ANNUAL MEETING

Mark your calendar for our **Annual Congregational Meeting, January 31, 2021**. Details are still being worked out on how we will meet, but we hope to maximize participation for this important meeting.



Please note that, according to New Spirit's constitution, you are **eligible to vote** if you are a confirmed member of the congregation who has communed at New Spirit and made a contribution of record in the current or preceding calendar year. Since this will, technically, be the 2020 Annual Meeting, the years in question are 2019 and 2020. Feel free to make a contribution now if you do not currently meet that requirement.

## CHRISTMAS WORSHIP 2020

So much of what makes Christmas feel like Christmas won't be happening this year. Here's what will be happening. Christmas Eve worship will be a recorded service uploaded to YouTube, as usual, but with more music. And we'll have two brief communion services on Zoom, using the recurring Zoom link. Those communion services will be at 4:00 and 8:00. If you don't have the Zoom link, please email or call Nancy in the office ([nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto:nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org), 520-296-2461) and she'll be happy to get it to you.



## REGRETTABLE BUT NECESSARY—NO IN-PERSON MEETINGS

Back when the positivity rate for COVID testing in Pima County was much lower than it is now, New Spirit's Council and our Reopening Working Group decided that, when that rate reached 10%, we would suspend all in-person activities. Sadly, we reached that rate last week.

As a result, the in-person Story discussion groups, the Women's Group, and the in-person forums for talking about the Growing Season proposal have all had to be suspended or moved online.

Especially regrettable is that the plan to allow people to come spend time in our sanctuary, amid Christmas decorations and music, has had to be scrapped.

If you have to come to church for some reason, it would be good to check with Nancy ahead of time to be sure she's there and to give her a heads-up that you're coming. She then can meet you by the door. It's safest for her if she can have her office more or less to herself.

Pastor Carol plans to come to church one day a week, but meetings will have to be by phone or video chat. If weather permits (if it's warm enough), she may be able to do some homebound visits outdoors. This depends on the policies at various facilities.

This is all very difficult. But we see a vaccine on the horizon and praise the Lord for that. In the meantime, as Bishop Hutterer points out in her letter, we wait. A very Advent thing to do. And we pray that every one of us will make it through this pandemic unscathed so that we can join together in person as the body of Christ very soon.

If you have any questions on all this, please call, email, or text Pastor Carol: 224-422-9552 or [carol@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto:carol@newspiritlutherantucson.org).



## GROWING SEASON PROPOSAL

Forums are underway—unfortunately, all online—to let us hear each other's thoughts on the vision and strategy put forward by New Spirit's Church Council. If you are in need of a new copy of the proposal, please let Nancy know ([nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto:nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org), 520-296-2461).

### Church Growth



If you're a voting member of New Spirit and were unable to participate in one of the Zoom forums, we will find a time to get your thoughts by phone. Everyone's input is important! We're all in mission together as the body of Christ.

## PASTOR ALAN'S NEW ADDRESS

Want to send a Christmas card to Pastor Alan? He and the bishop have moved into a new house and he sent the address: Rev. Alan Field & Bishop Deborah Hutterer, 35310 N. 27th Ave., Phoenix, AZ 85086.



## YOU CAN BE A YOUTUBE STAR!



...or, at least, an important part of New Spirit's online worship experience. We would love to have more people provide the recorded welcome and/or the prayers for Sunday worship. Later we will be again needing readers. The recording process itself is pretty simple, and the pastor would be happy to give guidance on writing the prayers if needed. If you're interested in helping with this, please contact Jenny Kwapich at [h2ojennyk@gmail.com](mailto:h2ojennyk@gmail.com). Thanks in advance!

The offering envelopes for 2021 are here. Call the office (520-296-2461) to arrange to pick up your envelopes. I will put them outside in a box so you can safely pick them up. Thank you.  
Nancy



## Inside Out Network – Good News Update!

We're on a roll! In addition to the recent and very generous \$5,000 grant from our very own New Spirit Endowment Board, we've just been awarded a \$20,000 capacity-building grant by the Community Food Bank of Southern Arizona to help us ramp up our staffing and upgrade our online platform. They're very excited by what we're doing, and we're really looking forward to partnering with them in 2021 and beyond to help connect people leaving prison with service providers and churches. This secure funding gives us some breathing room and allows us to bring three part-time employees on board starting now. I'm so excited and grateful for the support and partnerships that we've been able to forge over the years, including a new official Memorandum of Understanding to work with the Illinois Department of Corrections to expand across that state. Thanks to God for his faithfulness and blessings and to all of you for your prayers and support. If you're interested in finding out more about the Inside Out Network and possible volunteer opportunities, please email me at [fred@insideoutnetwork.net](mailto:fred@insideoutnetwork.net) ~Pastor Fred



## DEATH OF A FRIEND OF THE CONGREGATION

Pastor Alan let us know that he had heard from the family of Dan Joslin, who, with his wife, Jan, wintered with New Spirit for 16 or more years from Colorado Springs. Dan died of a massive heart attack on Friday, November 27. Jan asked Pastor Alan to let the New Spirit community know of his death. His memorial service will be streamed from Colorado Springs, Saturday December 12, at 1:00 p.m. at Bethel Lutheran Church, Colorado Springs, CO. <http://www.bethellutheran.net> Scroll to the bottom of their home page and there is a tab for "Funerals and Memorials."

Open that link and the service will stream live at 1:00 p.m. Folks can watch it later as it will be saved in that same link.

Direct Link to the service:

<https://boxcast.tv/view/memorial-for-dan-joslin-z2rhoqqu9fiv9z5k1dmv>



## WHERE TO LOOK FOR WORSHIP AND COMMUNION

New Spirit publishes a video worship service every Sunday on our YouTube channel. Just go to [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) and type New Spirit Lutheran Church Tucson in the search bar. Each service includes a sermon, music, and welcome and prayers by New Spirit members.

You can also gather with others online via Zoom every Sunday morning at 10:00 for a brief communion service followed by "virtual coffee hour," a chance to chat, stay connected, and support one another. To get the Zoom link, please email Pastor Carol at [carol@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto:carol@newspiritlutherantucson.org). We can also send instructions for getting onto Zoom.

Zoom Meeting



It would be great to have more people join in!

## Help Make an Impact with Thrivent Action Teams



Are you a Thrivent Member? You can get additional funds to help support ministries right here at New Spirit! Thrivent is a membership-owned fraternal organization and holistic financial services organization with deep roots in the Lutheran Church. Supporting your community is easy with Thrivent Action Teams. Apply to lead a group in a fundraiser, educational event, or service activity. Then, gather a team of volunteers to make an impact together. Once your project is approved, Thrivent provides \$250 in seed money and a customized kit of resources to get you started. Your team provides the passion to bring it to life.

All Thrivent clients with membership are eligible to lead a Thrivent Action Team. However, the number of teams each client can lead per year depends on membership type. Clients with benefit membership are eligible to lead two Thrivent Action Teams per calendar year, and clients with associate membership are eligible to lead one per calendar year. Questions? Check with Pastor Fred or go online for more details here: <https://www.thrivent.com/what-we-offer/generosity/thrivent-action-teams.html> ~Pastor Fred

### Women's Ministry Group Minutes for November 2020

Women's Ministry Group (WELCA Bible Study Group) met on November 11, 2020, at 1:30 p.m. at the church.

The meeting opened with Gloria Burke leading us in singing "Did You Ever Wonder What Heaven Is Like?" written by Barbara Rebok; followed by singing "I Was There to Hear Your Boring Cry" and "Canticle of the Turning."

Ana Mackay led devotions taken from Daily Gifts of Grace by Women of Faith; we all need to be patient as we await the adventures God has in store for each of us. Psalm 37:37 "Mark the blameless man, and behold the upright, for there is posterity for the man of peace."

Our Bible study (lead by Barbara Rebok) was Session Three of "Holy Time." God's presence in the future: no one can predict or fully prepare for the future, yet we live our lives oriented toward the future. We make plans, form hopes and imagine what could be.

We stuffed envelopes to send to all New Spirit households for the annual WELCA Thank Offering.

Our December meeting has been cancelled.

Linda Lamb – Secretary



### December Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations



12/4 R.J. Friend

12/15 Amber Uidenich

12/20 Marilyn Carter

12/6 Joel & Barbara Carty  
(Anniversary)

12/19 Carol Morales

12/26 Linda Lamb

12/9 Sandra Johnsen  
Paul Koster

12/27 Laurie Bernard

12/12 Joyce Dow



12/30 Don Austin  
Eva Kwapich  
Sarah Elmquist  
Ethan Rettig





## Produce On Wheels With - Out Waste (P.O.W.W.O.W.) 7th Annual Produce Season



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 YouTube

## Eastside Covenant Church

**EVERY SECOND SATURDAY** from November 2020  
through June 2021, Eastside Covenant Church will  
host P.O.W.W.O.W.'s market!

**Where?** 551 N Camino Seco, Tucson, AZ 85710

**When?** 8-11 am Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>

8-11 am Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup>

8-11 am Saturday, January 9<sup>th</sup>

8-11 am Saturday, February 13<sup>th</sup>

8-11 am Saturday, March 13<sup>th</sup>

7-10 am Saturday, April 10<sup>th</sup>

7-10 am Saturday, May 8<sup>th</sup>

6-9 am Saturday, June 12<sup>th</sup>

# New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail  
Tucson, AZ 85710

## Shout-Outs

***SPECIAL NOTE:*** Due to the uncertainty of dates that the church will re-open, we have not included a calendar with this newsletter. Please check the calendar posted on the website. Stay Safe and Stay Healthy!

***SHOUT OUT - To Ken Dobbs, John Lukecart and Don Crow for putting up the luminaries on the church and to John for decorating the sanctuary.***

***SHOUT OUT - To Sandra, Shelly and Karen Colwell for continuing Sunday School online.***

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!

<p><b>Sundays:</b> (in usual times) 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 &amp; Liturgies) You can currently watch services Sundays on YouTube.</p>	<p><b><i>How to contact us:</i></b> New Spirit Lutheran Church 8701 E. Old Spanish Trail Tucson, AZ 85710 <b>Phone:</b> (520) 296-2461 <b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="mailto:NewSpiritLutheranTucson@yahoo.com">NewSpiritLutheranTucson@yahoo.com</a> <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://newspiritlutherantucson.org">newspiritlutherantucson.org</a></p>
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