

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.

May 2024



TAKING A BREAK: We will not be printing a newsletter for the months of June & July. Look for any important notices or updates sent by email or included in the Sunday congregation bulletin.

Beloved of God,

We are entering the summer months. Schools will be ending the current school year in the coming weeks. The sun is out, and the temperatures are climbing higher and higher. By the end of the month, most of our "snowbirds" will have departed. In many ways we will be entering into a less busy time of year here at the church.

The newsletter will be taking a break for June and July, so I would like to share some good news for the first part of the year. I often talk about Average Sunday Attendance as the measurement we should go by when talking about "growth", because what good is having 1,000 new people join the congregation if they are not active. Of course, we also know averages can be difficult to change in a short amount of time. In 2022 the first 17 Sundays averaged 66.4 people in worship. That number slightly increased to 66.64 in 2023. Now in 2024 that number is 82.23. This is due in part to the continued efforts you all have put forward in inviting people and reaching out to those you have not seen recently in service. Keep up the good work!!

From a stewardship side, New Spirit you have continued to surpass expectations. Thanks to the hard work of your Council Treasurer, the Stewardship team, the Budget and Finance team, and of course, Nancy in the office, we continue to be on stable ground. As we travel during the summer months, please remember to continue to send in your offerings when you are not in worship.

Activities related to faith formation like Pastor's Book Study will take a brief break after May ends. If you are looking for ideas on additional readings, or activities for the summer months please let me know.

What does the summer hold if all these things are going on break? This is what I am most excited about sharing in this article.



Based on the lectionary Bible passages we have been engaging the last few weeks, for the months of May, June, and July we will have an intentional focus on spreading love. I am calling it "A Season of Love". Over the course of these three months congregation members will be challenged to spread love through various specific activities. Activity calendars will be available at the beginning of each month.

A variety of people will be working to update forms and processes ranging from how we minister to visitors to what does it look like if someone wants to use the Fellowship Hall for a non-church related event. Having these processes written will ensure that things will not slip through the cracks.

In closing, I would like to take a moment and say thank you. Thanks to each and every one of you reading this newsletter. I know that I am not your "typical" Lutheran pastor, and I have challenged you in many, many ways. It wasn't until recently that I began to understand some of the additional anxiety that I carry from my previous call. I have felt very blessed in my time with you. You have accepted me with all my quirks and differences. I thank you deeply for all that you have done. You have embraced my family and all that comes with that. To do this, you have had to change and be flexible. I am excited to see where the Holy Spirit calls us together over the coming years!

Pastor Hartman

May Prayer:

Holy God, we give you thanks. You have continued to bless us as individuals and as a community. Be with us all over the coming months. Watch over those that are traveling. Guide those that are making important decisions. Send your Holy Spirit to continue to enliven us as a congregation. These summer months may be difficult for some, we ask that you be with them. Be with the people that provide cooling stations, summer food programs, and more. Be with us as we undertake a summer of focused efforts in spreading your love to all people. Amen



In memory....Marilyn Linderkamp passed away peacefully in her sleep the morning of April 10th. Gene and Marilyn have been part of the New Spirit family since 2006. Her memorial service will be held on May 17th at 2:00 pm followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall. We will be serving finger food and appetizers. We would appreciate any help with side dishes and desserts. Please contact Nancy in the office if you would like to volunteer to bring something or help with set up and clean up.

Gloria Burke passed away on April 18th. Gloria and Archie have been long time members and joined Spanish Trail Lutheran Church in 1968. Her memorial service will be held on May 25th at 10:00 am, followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall. We will be serving sandwiches and sides. We would appreciate any help with side dishes. (Desserts are being provided by Gloria's sorority sisters). Please contact Nancy in the office if you would like to volunteer to bring something or help with set up and clean up.

Jay Schreiber passed away on April 8th following his battle with esophageal cancer. Jay joined New Spirit in 2017. Jay's wife Becky joined in 2023. His memorial service will be held on June 1st at 11:00 am, followed by a reception in Fellowship Hall. Details about what we are serving and volunteer needs will be forthcoming.

Reflections on the Vine and Branches by Cathy Cermak

I've been pondering Jesus' words in John 15 a lot. Jesus says he is the vine, and we are the branches, and if we abide in him, we will bear much fruit. We know that the branch cannot survive by itself, disconnected from the vine. It will wither and die because it is cut off from its very life blood. That's what I envision in my mind – a vine with life blood and love flowing into its many branches. Our very source of breath and life is the vine. Securely connected to the vine, a healthy branch can survive and thrive through storms, droughts, and other environmental threats. And the branch isn't alone. It is entwined with and connected to many branches, which, working together grow abundant fruit.

This is a simple image that gives my mind peace and rest. Jesus provides everything we need. As the vine, he provides all the nutrients we need to grow and produce good fruit. He is our only Source that feeds our souls. When I focus on that, I realize I don't need all the stuff that distracts and clutters my life. Centered in Jesus, I am free to let go of that stuff and simply focus on Jesus. As Father Richard Rohr says in *The Great Chain of Being: Simplifying Our Lives*, "Out of that plentitude—a sense of satisfaction and inner enoughness—we find it much easier to live simply." We are able to draw from the abundance Jesus provides and freely share it with others.

And that brings us to the fruit. What is the fruit that we are to bear, if not but the love of our neighbor and the kindness and aid we give to others? I know that the Bible lists many fruits of the Spirit, but in the end it all boils down to loving our neighbors and creation, and how we share our talents and gifts in that love. I can't help but make a connection with stewardship and how we are to be stewards of our fruit – our gifts and talents to the benefit of the community. As you go about your week, I hope the imagery of the vine, branches and fruit sustains you and keeps you centered in Jesus.

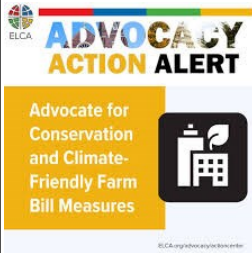


LAMA (Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of AZ) APRIL ACTION SUMMARY

You may know that LAMA opposed two bills introduced in the State House of Representatives (HB 2502 and 2503) because they would impose difficult work requirements on many SNAP (formerly food stamps) recipients that would have been impossible for those people to meet. Many Lutherans and others across the state sent letters, emails or Request to Speak notifications to our legislators. LAMA had sent out alerts through its weekly newsletter. Fortunately, Gov. Hobbs vetoed these bills, so the SNAP program should be safe from any detrimental changes, at least for a while.

Despite its bipartisan support in the House, HB 2815, Yes in God's Back Yard (YIGBY), has been stalled in the Senate. "This bill would allow houses of worship to construct low and middle income housing on their property regardless of zoning status; this would empower our churches to continue ministering to our neighbors and would help alleviate the state's housing crisis." The Senate President, Warren Petersen, is responsible for determining which bills get read and assigned to a committee. So far YIGBY has not even had its first read. If you're a constituent in Legislative District 14, you can send a letter or email to Petersen @ WPETERSEN@azleg.gov, urging him to push this bill through and expressing its importance to faith communities and to helping alleviate the housing crisis in AZ.

Join the ELCA in advocating for a Conservation and Climate-Friendly Farm Bill. You can read more about it under the ELCA's Advocacy Action Center: <https://give.elca.org/page/56774/action/1>. The Conservation and Climate article includes an easy to complete box which automatically emails your legislators in Congress.



Want to learn more about how you can impact public policies and laws in AZ and the country? Check out LAMA's website: lamaz.org. Under the Take Action tab at the top, you can sign up to receive LAMA's weekly newsletter and be informed about impending legislation. You can also sign up for the Request To Speak (RTS) platform, where you can quickly give your legislators a thumbs up or down regarding your support of specific legislation, just at the click of a button. AZ Lutherans are using their voices, and it's fun to be part of the action!

Women's Ministry Group Minutes for April 2024

Women's Ministry Group (WELCA Bible Study Group) met at 1:30 on April 10, 2024, at the church.

Our Bible study was the last part of the "Scripture and Nature" series "Food". Scripture is like food; it nourishes us and sustains us. We often forget the way we eat matters. Not just for our own bodies but the lives of our neighbors, near and far, and to the nonhuman world. Food is one more way we can love the Lord our God and love our neighbors as ourselves. Jesus spends a lot of time eating with people. Shared meals build relationships and demonstrate care. Jesus' own practices teach us that faithful eating is not just about what we eat, but with whom we eat. Everything we need to know about faithful eating we learned from the Lord's Supper, where there is a place for everyone, and enough for everyone.

We will decide at our next meeting if we will meet for Bible study during the summer months; or possibly get together for lunch.

Our next gathering will be on May 8, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. at the church.

Linda Lamb – Secretary



Please join the team on Tuesday, May 14th from 10am to 1pm at the City of Tucson's Housing First building at 195 W Irvington Rd. to pack 300 Homeless Care Packages. These are distributed by the City when visiting homeless encampments. We will be meeting at New Spirit Lutheran Church south parking lot at 9:15 am if you want to carpool.



Fellowship Dinner

The MONTHLY Tuesday night dinner will be held on May 21st. This month we are doing potluck. The sign up sheet is posted in the Narthex if you would like to participate. There will be no dinner in June, July or August. Look for information regarding the continuance of Tuesday night dinners after the summer.



May Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations

05/02 Stephen Lamb

05/20 Jamie Buglewicz

05/25 Robert Daliege

05/03 Colleen Busboom-Green



05/30 Ramona Ihrke

05/15 Violet Thatcher

05/31 Diane Schreiner



BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

Who will feed the kids this weekend?



We are blessed to provide snack packs for 327 students each weekend for Steele, Henry, Ford, and Erickson Elementary schools. We always include a special treat for holidays.

Over the years, we have provided other much needed supplies for our students, such as learning pads for a special needs class, backpacks, shoes, hand sanitizer and masks during the Covid pandemic, paper, underwear, and sponsorship of book fairs.

JOIN US! 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).

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.

Contact Laurie Bernard at lbernard2008@hotmail.com with questions.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THIS MINISTRY



HOMELESS BLESSINGS "BECAUSE WE CARE"

JOIN US THE 2ND SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH
MAY THROUGH SEPTEMBER 9AM TO 11AM

Our next event is May 11th. Breakfast is on the menu! Feel the need to serve others? Join us!

Our events are not just for the unhoused, but for anyone experiencing financial/food insecurity. In addition to the supplies for our homeless friends, we offer a hot meal, hygiene products, clothing, shoes, blankets, some packaged food, haircuts, and a place for some social activity.

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

New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85710

Shout-Outs

SHOUT OUT - To our faithful ushers: Sharon Dobbs, Karen Colwell, Nancy Cunningham, Robin Hughes.

SHOUT OUT - To April hospitality team. Everything was delicious.

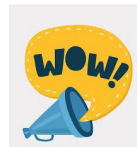
SHOUT OUT - To our tech crews, Shelly Colwell, Ken Dobbs, Ethan Rettig and our students, Henry and Eva Kwapich.

SHOUT OUT - To Laurie Bernard for her work with the homeless that extends beyond 2nd Saturdays.

SHOUT OUT - To Craig Geiger, our plastic man.

SHOUT OUT - To the witness and welcome team for their dedication.

SHOUT OUT - To the Praise team for enlivening our worship every Sunday.



Please submit words of thanks and praise to Nancy at 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

Phone: (520) 296-2461

E-Mail: NewSpiritLutheranTucson@yahoo.com

Website: newspiritlutherantucson.org