

# 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.*

November 2024

Beloved of New Spirit,

It is hard to believe we only have 2 months left for this year. When I look back at the past year, I am amazed by the work that God has called us to do at this time and in this place. In January we voted on and adopted a new welcome statement. The months following have been spent asking questions and dreaming about how we can live into our welcome statement more fully.



**Welcome, beloved of God!**

**Welcome people from every tradition and those new to the faith. This is a place where you are welcome to celebrate and sorrow, to rejoice and to recover.**

**This is a place where lives are made new.**

**Welcome to all who want to follow Christ, have no church home, have doubts, have questions, or do not believe.**

**Welcome to new visitors and old friends.**

**Welcome to all who have ever felt hurt or unwelcome by the church.**

**Welcome to people of every age, color and culture, marital status, ability and challenge, sexual orientation, gender identity, and gender expression and all things that make us unique individuals created by God.**

**Welcome to a community where love, mercy, grace, and forgiveness are valued and practiced.**

**Welcome to a community that stands against the evils of this world including all forms of racism, hatred, and bigotry.**

**No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.**

**Come, follow Christ with us.**

**Welcome, again, on this day.**

**Welcome to New Spirit.**

Some of the ways we have lived into that statement have been small, for example using more contrasting texts and backgrounds for the slides used during worship. We have also gone back to including the majority of the texts for items like the Prayers of Intercession for those that struggle with hearing. There have also been big ways we have lived into our welcome statement, like the installation of the power doors on both sides of the sanctuary.

For some these improvements may not mean much, for those that are directly impacted by them they are the physical embodiment of the welcome we claim to practice here. Of course, there is always more that we can do. We know that we need to have our hearing loop system looked at and possibly replaced in a way that will ensure the system meets the needs of those that use it.

We are also working to better extend welcome to those that are in the LGBTQIA2S+ community. Things like placing rainbow streamers in the narthex, wearing lanyards with the rainbow flag, and more are visible signs of welcome to a community that often is excluded by churches. Personally, your efforts to love and support my oldest go beyond any words I can write. You all have made the effort to call my oldest Tobias even though that is not the name he had when he was first introduced to you. You have also made the change to using the pronouns he/him instead of ones that were initially used for Tobias. During the beginning of 2025 we will explore the option of officially becoming a Reconciling in Christ congregation.

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These are just a few ways we have lived into the New Spirit Lutheran Church Welcome Statement. I know it has not always been easy as we have worked to live into the statement we adopted. There may be some that wonder if these changes were necessary. There may be some that disagree or don't understand. For those that are directly impacted, these changes are the true embodiment of the gospel and reflect a welcome that goes beyond words on a page.

All of this has been done through your giving of time, love, and finances. Without you these things would not have been possible. We have come a long way and I look forward to continuing to journey down this road at this time and in this place.

Pastor Hartman

## November Prayer

God of all people and all things, we ask that you continue to encourage us to be more inclusive at this time and in this place. Empower us to be abundantly generous so that we may be witnesses to the love that you have for all people. Amen



## Advent

This year we will be using resources from Sanctified Art, the same company we used for this year's Lenten resources. These resources include words for worship services, home devotional, and faith enrichment activities. The first Sunday of Advent is December 1st.



"Advent is a season of endings and beginnings. As the calendar year comes to a close, a new church year begins. Christ's birth ushers us into new ways of living and loving; and yet, the world as we know it spins madly on. In many ways, pregnant Mary was surrounded by endings—large and small, personal and political. But Mary proclaimed hope in a God who was and is making all things new. Christ's birth offered a beautiful new beginning for shepherds and Magi alike—all the while, King Herod tried to bring Christ's story to an end. When we ourselves navigate seasons filled with endings and beginnings, we need reminders. We need words that can feel like steady ground, like a path for our feet to find as we step forward into the unknown.

This worship series is shaped around several reminders we all need from time to time: you are a blessing; we can't go alone; do the good that is yours to do; hope is worth the risk; love knows your name; don't forget to laugh; and the road isn't straight. These reminders root us in the fundamental truths of our faith. Many of them are life lessons we teach to children—lessons that adults continue to learn and relearn. They may resemble the blessings we impart to loved ones during special ceremonies like weddings, graduations, or baptisms. And so, we invite you to move through this Advent season as if you are entering a sacred new chapter, holding fast to the reminders that will bolster you for the journey ahead. For no matter what you are facing, no matter what this new day brings, love is your beginning."

Christmas Eve service will be held at 4:00 pm.

## FELLOWSHIP DINNER:

Dinner this month will be held on November 19th at 6:00 pm. We will be serving soup, sandwiches, salad and dessert. There will be no dinner in December. Beginning 2025 we will switch to a Wednesday night dinner. Dates will be determined. If you want to participate look for the sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the Narthex or contact Sharon Dobbs or Edna Walton.



## **Mission: Spread Christmas Cheer**

After some discussion, we will be spreading some additional Christmas Cheer. This year instead of adopting a family, this year we're on a secret mission to support someone close to the congregation. We are trying to keep this information as secretive as possible so that the person being blessed will be surprised. We are asking for donations to be able to purchase gifts. If you are interested in helping with this mission, please contact Laurie Bernard.



## **Church Council Update:**

After a bit of a break for the summer, the council is again meeting monthly in their leadership role here at New Spirit. Agenda items in the near future include reviewing current security levels both inside and outside of our buildings and property; preparing for our annual congregation meeting, including a proposed budget and slate of officers for 2025; and ways to expand how we "live into" our Welcome Statement. As Pastor Hartman mentioned in the September Newsletter: this includes identifying New Spirit's key values and guiding principles in such a way to "help us focus our efforts on specific community needs and ministries." It is how we will bring our Welcome Statement to life and "embrace who we are as a community in new and exciting ways."

Recent actions by the council include the hiring of Aaron, our new custodian - please introduce yourself to him as your paths cross and welcome him here. The council also approved the upgrade of the lighting system in the Sanctuary, as well as automating the doors into the Narthex. The council continues to look for new opportunities to expand our outreach into the community, and recently contracted with the Park Place to share publicly "who we are and what we're doing" within the community.



We ask that you continue to pray for the church council in their leadership role here at New Spirit.

Lorrie Firth

## **Women's Ministry**

Women's Ministry Group (WELCA Bible Study Group) met at 1:30 on October 9, 2024, at the church.

Our Bible Study this month was session two of a three-part series on Receiving Grace: A study of Ephesians. Believing in grace means believing we are worthy of God's help. Believing that we are beautiful and special because we are created in God's image. The Holy Spirit is at work within us and Christ dwells in our hearts. God's grace comes into our lives through the presence and love of other people; and His love is revealed to us through the love and sense of belonging we feel in our relationships. God's power is at work within us to be able to accomplish abundantly far more than we can ask or imagine.

Several cards were mailed out over the past months for birthdays, get-well, thinking of you and sympathy for our church family members and friends.

The Sunday School is working on assembling first aid kits to hand out to the homeless for the Christmas season. The children have also adopted a local nursing home to send Christmas cards to the residents.

The annual WELCA thank offering will occur on Sunday, November 17, 2024. Envelopes will be handed out to the congregation on Sunday November 10, 2024.

At our next meeting we will finalize plans for our December gathering.

Our next gathering will be on November 13, 2024, at 1:30 p.m. at the church.

Linda Lamb – Secretary



## Called to Love, "For Such a Time as This"

"For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance for the Jews will arise from another place, but you and your father's family will perish. And who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" (Esther 4:14)

The Book of Esther teaches us that God is sovereign over human plans and operates behind the scenes without our knowing it. That's what God did with Esther. God put Esther in the right place at the right time ("at such a time as this") to save the Jews. Likewise, God uses each and every one of us and New Spirit as the body of Christ, to serve divine purposes.

That's the theme of our 2025 Stewardship Appeal, with special attention to improving accessibility for all our siblings and living more fully into our welcome statement. Our goal is to increase our income by \$40,000. To that end, our initiatives are:

### Creating Safe and Welcome Spaces – (\$8,000 or \$154/week)

Enlarge and update the bathroom in the nursery room to accommodate those who use wheelchairs or walkers and require the assistance of a caretaker; convert the nursery into a comfortable, private space for families to grieve and/or receive pastoral care; purchase therapeutic items for the cry room, to calm and soothe someone who is experiencing sensory overload and needs a quiet space to worship.

### Increasing Sensitivity for Those Facing Special Challenges – (\$2,000 or \$39/week)

Provide two half-day workshops and educational resources to increase our understanding, sensitivity, and inclusive advocacy for our siblings in Christ who live with special circumstances.

### Sustaining and Growing in Ministry Excellence – (\$30,000, or \$577/week)

Close the gap between our income and day-to-day expenses (see the Building Towards Sustainability article).

You will learn more about these important ministry initiatives in the next couple of weeks. You will also receive a letter and a statement of intent or commitment. If you have not submitted a commitment in the past, we thank you for the generous gifts you have given over the years, and we encourage you to consider making a formal commitment this year. We are seeking 100% return on statements of intent. If you have regularly committed over the years, we thank you for your intentional faithfulness and encourage you to increase your giving as you are able.

Stewardship Sunday will be November 17, 2025. At that time, we will bring our statements of intent to the altar. In the following weeks, we will celebrate your generosity and faithfulness.

Stewardship Committee



STEWARDSHIP  
A Way of Life

## Building Towards Sustainability

You may recall that last year when we began an intentional stewardship approach, we set as our main initiative to increase overall giving by \$120,000 over a four-year period of time. In 2024 our initiative to address this four-year plan, which we called Sustaining and Growing in Ministry Excellence, was to increase giving by \$30,000. By the end of 2024 we will have achieved that goal by 88%. Way to go, New Spirit! Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness!

New Spirit is so blessed! We are mortgage-free, and we have the blessings of a healthy endowment fund and restricted funds from the bequests of faithful members over the years. Restricted funds have afforded New Spirit the ability to address issues like fixing the sanctuary lighting and installing long-needed automatic door openers to the sanctuary. Restricted funds are also critical for those "rainy day" emergencies that occasionally befall our aging buildings and campus. These are appropriate uses of restricted funds. Endowment dividends are used twice a year to bless community agencies and ministries through grant awards. Endowment principle funds are generally reserved for special ministry drives like our Growing Seasons initiative. Through Growing Seasons, two-year "seed money" for a much-needed Worship Leader and funds to freshen up our campus, among other things were provided.

The tough reality is that for many years, New Spirit's giving has not kept up with week-to-week operational expenses, even though our budget projections have been modest. Years ago we dealt with the deficits we were facing by not enacting or fully realizing our visions and dreams for New Spirit. A couple of years ago our projected budget deficit was so great, the congregation approved the use of all of the funds in the smaller Arivaca Endowment Fund and \$100,000 of the principle of the primary Endowment Fund towards our operation budget. These monies sustained us for two years.

We do not want to keep drawing from restricted and endowment funds indefinitely to meet our operational budget. And we don't want to sacrifice our ministry and outreach goals and visions and become stagnant. In other words, it is critical that New Spirit continues to *sustain and grow in ministry excellence!* To get there, we must continue to close the gap between our giving and our day-to-day expenses. In this second of our four year goal of doing that, we need to increase giving by another \$30,000, or \$577/week.

Faithful New Spirit siblings, each and every one of you are vital to New Spirit's mission! We hope that you will prayerfully consider your response to the call of stewardship, respond with generous hearts, and increase your giving as you are able.



### PASTOR'S BOOK STUDY

Please watch for information regarding a new book list for 2025. We will be collaborating with Lutheran Church of the Foothills this year.



**ARIZONA PREMIERE**  
**BENDING TOWARDS THE LIGHT...**  
**A JAZZ NATIVITY**




DEC SUNDAY 22ND 5PM    DEC MONDAY 23RD 7PM

DOORS OPEN 30 MIN BEFORE SHOWTIME

HOSTED BY NEW SPIRIT LC  
 8701 E OLD SPANISH TRAIL  
 TUCSON. AZ 85710

Don't miss this Arizona Premiere!!! A show that has enthralled audiences since 1985 across cities, including New York City!!!

The Jazz Nativity is the Christmas Story told through the medium of jazz, featuring jazz greats Dave Brubeck, Lionel Hampton and Tito Puente.

Composed, arranged and produced by Anne Phillips, this production is sure to love!

Hosted by New Spirit Lutheran Church. Go to [www.newspiritlutherantucson.org](http://www.newspiritlutherantucson.org) under events to purchase your tickets.

## November & December Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations

11/04 Cordelia Lundquist

11/21 Rick & Lorrie Firth  
(Anniversary)

12/12 Joyce Dow

11/06 Doug Butler

12/15 Amber Uidenich

11/07 Barbara Rebok

11/26 Chip & Colleen Green  
(Anniversary)

12/19 Carol Morales  
Gary Grochowski

11/09 Camellia Thatcher  
Mark Buglewicz

11/27 Heather Thatcher

12/20 Marilyn Carter

11/10 Hope & Torrey Thatcher  
(Anniversary)

12/22 Paul Koster

11/11 Edna Walton  
Cathy Cermak



12/26 Linda Lamb

11/12 Craig Geiger  
Hope Thatcher

12/27 Laurie Bernard

11/17 Monica Fuller  
Pastor Hartman

12/30 Eva Kwapich  
Sarah Elmquist  
Ethan Rettig

12/01 Zinnia-Grace Thatcher



# BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK

*Who will feed the kids this weekend?*

## NEW SPIRIT LUTHERAN CHURCH WILL!



We are serving 360 students each weekend for the 2024-2025 school year at Steele, Henry, Ford, Erickson, and now Soleng Tom Elementary schools!

Thanks to your generous contributions, we can also provide pants, underwear, and socks in the smaller sizes for each school to help with unforeseen "accidents".

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

. THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THIS MINISTRY

## HOMELESS BLESSINGS "BECAUSE WE CARE"



JOIN US THE 2<sup>ND</sup> SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH  
OCTOBER THROUGH APRIL, 1PM TO 3PM

***Our next event is November 9th from 1pm to 3pm. We will be serving Hamburgers and Hot dogs with side dishes.*** Feel the need to serve others? Join the team!

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

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 - Karen Colwell for all the work she did the last 6 months for Trunk or Treat.***

***SHOUT OUT - Craig Geiger for leading worship on 10/27.***

***SHOUT OUT - Lorrie Firth & Cathy Cermak for their work on this year's Stewardship efforts.***

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:*

New Spirit Lutheran Church  
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