

# 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.*

October 2020

## UNDER THE SAME SKY, UNDER THE SAME LORD

As Pastor Fred was introducing *The Story* to us in his September message, he talked about the image of an Upper Story (God's story) that intersects and intertwines with a Lower Story (the story of humankind). Our own individual stories are then part of both of those stories. So: Upper/Lower/You and Me.

That way of looking at the story in the Bible brought to mind something I read a long time ago in someone's memoir (specifics irretrievable in my brain at this point). The author was to be separated from her loved ones, and not by choice. But, as she left, she asked her daughter to look up at the sky every night, at the moon and stars. She promised to do the same. Then, she said, you'll know we're connected, looking at the same sky, the same stars, the same moon, even though we're apart.

Remembering that, I thought to myself: Here we are, people of New Spirit—old-timers and newer members, people who came once or twice before the shutdown, little children and bigger kids, people who were already pretty much homebound and people who've been made homebound by the coronavirus—here we are apart but together, all looking "up" at the same Upper-Story God, reading the same lower-story stories of our foremothers and forefathers in the faith.

What a wonderful way to be connected while we're apart! What a wonderful, ongoing reminder that the Spirit of God that moves in and through our church, our community of believers, is always binding us together no matter where we are physically.

This is an era in the Lower Story that humankind will remember for a long time, a part of shared human history. We know enough of God's story to be confident that God is at work in the midst of all this, whether or not we can put our finger on where and how. But let the church, Christ's church, stay united under one Lord, attending to that big defining story.

Our God is a God who champions life over death, health over sickness, faith over despair. Let's keep looking for our own stories there, in God's story. And let's see what we learn about God, about humankind, and about ourselves.

One final note: If you don't have your copy of *The Story* or if you haven't joined a conversation group, see the brief article on page 3 for information on getting the book and joining the conversation.

Health and blessings to you!  
Pastor Carol



## HAVE YOU MET WITH PASTOR CAROL?

Because we're not gathering on-site on Sundays, Pastor Carol is trying to meet with New Spirit members and regular attenders in person at church (safely distanced) or by Zoom or phone. She's had the opportunity to meet with more than 30 people so far, but that means there are still plenty of people who haven't been able to find time yet.



Let's meet

To schedule a 45-minute conversation, either daytime or in the evening, please call or email Nancy in the office (520-296-2461 or [nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto:nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org)).

## REOPENING WORKING GROUP INITIAL DECISIONS

A group of volunteers has gathered online for an initial meeting of a Reopening Working Group to talk about plans and precautions related to COVID-19. We began to talk about possibilities for in-person worship at some point in the future. But we spent most of the meeting on setting standards for right now. Since we now have three small in-person conversation groups meeting to talk about *The Story*, we wanted to be sure those gatherings are as safe as possible.

We set these current standards:

Anyone entering the building must wear a mask and keep it on. The exception is staff when they're sitting at their own desks with no one else nearby and Pastor Carol's meetings with individual parishioners, when they are able to sit a good distance apart.

People with breathing issues that make wearing a mask unworkable are better off not coming to the church building for now. If they need to, social distancing is essential.

In conversation group gatherings and Women's Ministry Group meetings, everyone is required to keep their mask on except when they are speaking.

We are making masks and hand sanitizer available at entrances and by the entrance into the Fellowship Hall.

Tables and chairs in the Fellowship Hall along with door handles and other "high-touch" surfaces are wiped down with disinfectant after meetings.

Nancy has posted signs to spell out the mask requirement and to remind people using the restrooms to wash their hands for at least 20 seconds.

The Working Group will keep an eye on guidance from the state and county departments of health and from the Grand Canyon Synod as we look toward returning to in-person worship in some form.



If you have questions or comments, or if you'd like to be part of the Reopening Working Group, please get in touch with Pastor Carol ([carol@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto:carol@newspiritlutherantucson.org)).

## NEED AT THE BORDER

Cruzando Fronteras, a joint ELCA/Episcopal ministry on the border seeking to work with and provide shelter for asylum-applicants, is in need of supplies. With more than 200 people in their shelter, they desperately need food supplies. Cash contributions work best as that allows them to purchase from local merchants and not have to worry about customs. If you would like to contribute to Cruzando Fronteras, you may send a check to the New Spirit office, clearly marking what it's for, and we'll pass along what we receive. Alternately, you can give through their website at [fronteras.azdiocese.org](http://fronteras.azdiocese.org), which has a donation button as well as a link for an Amazon gift list.

*Donations  
Needed  
Can you help?*

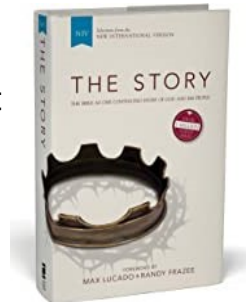
## GROCERY SHOPPING ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE FOR SENIORS



The Pima Council on Aging is offering grocery shopping assistance to people 60 and older whose annual income is at or below \$25,520 to help them avoid risky situations during the COVID-19 crisis. To access this assistance, call the PCOA Helpline (520-790-7262) or email [help@pcoa.org](mailto:help@pcoa.org). You may also go through Lutheran Social Services by calling Maria at 520-748-2300, ext. 2300. Please note: Eligibility requirements may be different for people living outside the Tucson city limits.

## THE STORY BEGINS

New Spirit and friends are reading *The Story* together, chapter-by-chapter, for 31 weeks. *The Story* is an abridged version of the Bible assembled chronologically so that it reads like a novel. As we read together, we'll go deeper into God's word at the same time as we get a better understanding of the broad sweep of the story of God's history with humankind.



Free copies of *The Story* are available at church (cost is \$5, if you choose to contribute for your copy). If you can't make it to church to get yours, just let us know (520-296-2461 or [nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org](mailto:nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org)) and we'll get a copy to you.

It's also not too late to sign on for a weekly conversation group for a chance to reinforce what you're reading and share your insights with others. Current groups are listed here, and we'll add more if needed.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 11:00am at church (limit 10 per session)

Thursday evening at 7:00 via Zoom

Sunday morning at 9:00 via Zoom

We also have a Facebook group as a forum to share thoughts, insights, and questions as you read. Go to Facebook and search for "New Spirit Reads The Story."

Please feel free to invite your friends to join in! Find your story in God's story!

## Annual Congregational Meeting Postponed To January

Unprecedented times call for unprecedented actions. And so, in keeping with the crazily unprecedented year we're now experiencing, the council has unanimously decided to postpone our annual congregational meeting until mid- to late-January (when we're well past the holidays).

### Here's why...

1. Due to the transition to our new pastoral staff and the effect that the pandemic has had on everyone's schedule, the budget process is already about a month behind its normal schedule. We need extra time to carefully consider the best way to structure the budget for the coming year in a way that helps drive the mission forward.
2. At the same time, the council is in the midst of an ongoing process of drafting a proposal to engage in some intentional renewal efforts in the coming years. We are hoping to coordinate this process with our next annual meeting.
3. We need time to figure out how we can best have an annual meeting during a pandemic. We'll need to figure out how to maximize participation, by Zoom and in person. There are lots of angles to figure out.
4. As part of our deliberations, we addressed whether or not our constitution allows us to make this decision. Bylaw #1 says, "The Annual Meeting shall be held in December as determined by the Congregation Council." Several things came to mind for us.
  - a. Since it reads "shall" instead of "may," it's clear that the meeting is *normally* intended to be held in December.
  - b. The bylaw also gives some reasonable scope and responsibility to the council ("as determined by") to set the date.
  - c. There was a unanimous feeling that virtually everyone in the congregation understands the gravity and the emergency nature of the pandemic and would understand that reasonable accommodations and adjustments might have to be made by the council at this time.

**To recap:** We believe that we need additional time this fall in order to (a) design a way to hold the meeting (in-person and online) safely and with maximum participation and (b) adequately work through the budget and planning process. When we come to the end of this current calendar year, we'll just continue into the new year with a one-month continuation of the framework of the current budget, and with our current council members. When more of the pieces begin to fall into place later this fall, we'll set and announce the new January meeting date with plenty of lead time. We hope that you both understand and support this decision. In the meantime, please get in touch with the pastors or any members of Church Council if you have any questions or concerns.

### Annual Congregational Meeting



~Pastor Fred



Attention all you Amazon shoppers!

You might know this already but if you order through smileamazon, Amazon will donate some portion of your purchase amount to a charity of your choice that is listed with them. You do not need to establish a different account. Just go to smileamazon and all your info is there. ICS is one of those charities.

## Introducing the Inside Out Network



Many of you probably know by now that I'm your quarter-time pastor and that I have another, full-time responsibility with something called the Inside Out Network (ION). But I'm guessing that most of you don't really know much about what that work entails, except that it has something to do with prison ministry or with people leaving prison. So it's probably high time I gave you a better sense of what the Inside Out Network is, and what we're trying to accomplish.

**What it is and how it works.** Years ago I heard someone say, *if you're the solution, what's the problem?* I thought it was a great insight and a very helpful way to zero in on exactly what problem we're trying to help solve at the Inside Out Network. So here's the problem we're working on...

Every year, more than 600,000 people are released from state prisons across the country, with Arizona accounting for roughly 19,000 of that number. Nearly every returning citizen steps into a reentry landscape that is largely unmapped, fragmented, uncoordinated, ineffective, inefficient, and plagued by the twin systemic evils of invisibility and isolation. Because of poor communication, constantly changing service providers, and out-of-date or incomplete information, most returning citizens simply can't see the path to the help that is out there for them. At the same time, week after week, life-changing programs go undersubscribed, job-training classes operate at half-capacity, halfway houses have unfilled beds, and ministries are being shut down because service providers lack an effective way to connect to and communicate with returning citizens in real time. The problem isn't that people are stupid or lazy or uncaring. What they are is isolated and invisible. The problem is that *everybody is disconnected*.

We're tackling that problem head on. We've developed a practical tool and approach for reentry with a special kind of website. In a way similar to how eBay or eHarmony works to match people (buyers and sellers for eBay, singles for eHarmony), the Inside Out Network website makes it easy for inmates and returning citizens and service providers to connect, to search for and find relevant matches, and to reach out proactively and message each other. Bottom line, think of ION as the eHarmony of reentry.

**Where we are right now.** After pioneering the ION platform in Chicago over the past few years, we're now partnering with the Arizona Department of Corrections to implement ION across the state. We're currently in the rollout phase, starting by enrolling service providers. Once we have a critical mass of service providers enrolled, the Arizona Department of Corrections will begin promoting ION among inmates and returning citizens. Our plan is to be up and running later this fall.

I originally started this ministry as an outreach of our church in Chicago, focused on visiting prisoners and even writing a book for inmates, *Spiritual Survival Guide for Prison and Beyond* (let me know if you'd like a copy). Over the years, we shifted our focus to reentry and we've now become our own independent non-profit organization, based right here in Tucson! I currently have eight part-time student interns from ASU's school of Criminology and Criminal Justice working with me, as well as volunteers in Illinois.

**How you can get involved.** As our work grows here in Arizona, I anticipate that we'll be looking for a variety of volunteer help. If the Holy Spirit has given you a heart for this kind of ministry and prods you to get involved in some way, please reach out to me and we'll figure out a way to get you started. In any case, please pray for our work, for the many reentry service providers, churches, and ministries that are trying to help and, above all, for the men and women who are leaving prison, ready to rebuild their lives.

~Pastor Fred



## Vision. Strategy.

In the coming months, expect to hear these two words a lot around New Spirit. That's because, for the past several months, the council and the pastors have been spending a lot of time together exploring where God might be directing us as a congregation in the next few years. And at the heart of our prayers and discussions is an emphasis on surfacing two key elements that are always part of healthy, growing congregational life: vision and strategy.



Our hope, prayer, and plan is to be able to take this emerging vision and strategy and create a draft proposal later this fall for a way forward for New Spirit. We're aiming for something bold but wise, risky yet measured, and inspiring but achievable. In other words, we're aiming to combine both vision and strategy. In the draft proposal we'll be sharing with and recommending to all of you, we'll offer our vision for where the Lord might be leading us as well as a well-thought-out strategy to help us get there over the next few years. We'll be looking at a process of discernment with all of you. So, in preparation for our upcoming conversations together, I thought it might be helpful to spell out what we mean by each word.

### Vision.

Pastor Andy Stanley talks about vision as a "mental picture of what *could* be...fueled by a passion that it *should* be." That's really helpful. Think of vision as a picture of God's preferred future for our congregation. It paints a picture of where we want to go and what we want to become, and then it gives us a palpable sense of what that would look and feel like.

Vision imagines what can be and sees what doesn't exist...*yet*. Vision asks the question, *what's the big and wonderful picture?* It means stepping back from what *isn't* happening at our congregation and using our imagination to see what *could* happen. It's sketching out a bold but do-able picture of what our church would look like five years from now if God really got his hands on us and worked in us and through us.

A lively, compelling, and God-pleasing vision can do wonders for a congregation. It's a uniting force, helping us set aside our personal agendas and preferences in favor of our shared future. It's an energizing force, rousing us from our complacency as we *imagine together how wonderful this could be!* And it's a focusing force, helping us keep our eyes on the prize and avoid wasteful distractions.

### Strategy.

Vision speaks to our heart. Strategy speaks to our head. Strategy is the high-level game plan to turn the vision from a mental picture into a tangible reality. And it's a key component of organizational life that is, sadly, often lacking in congregations. Strategy is more than a list of specific actions or tactics that we might engage in. A famous article on strategy years ago explained that strategy is really the *combined* answer to three interlocking questions...

Cont'd on page 7

**1. What should we do next?** This is the question of the Objective. The objective is more about doing “the right things” instead of the “doing things right.” The objective should be specific, measurable, and time-bound. What specific focus should we have and for how long?

**2. Where *won’t* we go?** This is the question of the Scope. In order to get where we’re going, what do we have to say No to? The scope doesn’t prescribe exactly what should be done. In fact, it encourages experimentation and initiative. But, to ensure that the boundaries are clear to everyone, the scope should specify where we *won’t* go. Doing this allows a church to focus on its wildly important, God-inspired goals. But this is hard for many churches to do, because of our tendency to try to please everybody.

**3. What makes us distinctive?** This is the question of the Value Proposition.  
 What unique activities, qualities, or combination of activities do we (or could we) offer?  
 What is our core of uniqueness? Why *our* church?

When you think about it this way, it’s easy to see why coming up with an effective strategy can be a real challenge for a congregation and its leaders. It’s more than simply coming up with three disconnected answers to three disconnected questions. Strategic thinking means *combining* these three answers so that they fit together in a meaningful and effective way, and then having the conviction and discipline to stick to the direction decided on. Being strategic means setting priorities and sticking to them. It means accepting and explaining the reality of tradeoffs. It often means disappointing people that we love. It means saying no to good people with good ideas *for the sake of the vision*. And yet, when done right, strategy can be the very thing that helps our God-given vision take shape and become reality.

If you have a heart and a head, you can learn to be visionaries and strategic thinkers. God has a lot in store for us, so stay tuned.

~Pastor Fred

October Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations		
10/02 Jakob Rettig		10/19 Sharon Dobbs
10/04 Mary Lou Rex Robert & Nancy Daliege (Anniversary)		10/20 Valerie Friend Mark & Jamie Buglewicz (Anniversary)
10/08 Barbara Rapp		10/24 Judy McFarland
10/15 Mary Henkle		10/27 Carol Hughes
10/18 Marlene Hansen		

## Women's Ministry Group Minutes for September 2020

Women's Ministry Group (WELCA Bible Study Group) met on September 9, 2020 at 1:30 p.m. at the church.

The meeting opened by singing some of our favorite hymns: "What a Friend We Have in Jesus"; "I Love to Tell the Story" and "Jesus Loves Me".

Barbara Rebok led devotions giving the history of nostalgia; how memory can be a curse as well as a blessing. We thank God for the gift of memory.

Our Bible study was Session One of "Holy Time." Holy time is, first and foremost, God's time. Holy time is also how we live and move and have our being through acts of memory that re-member us as God's people. We explored the questions: Why does remembrance play a central role in Christian worship and living; what is the difference between faithful tradition and nostalgia; and how does a great cloud of witnesses from our past continue to shape us?

### OLD BUSINESS:

Most upcoming gatherings have been postponed or cancelled.



### NEW BUSINESS:

A motion was carried and a donation of \$75.00 from our project funds will be sent to the Navajo Mission.

A discussion is slated for our next meeting on how to handle our Thank Offering if church services are still not allowed the month of November.

Next meeting will be held on October 14, 2020, at 1:30 in the church.

Linda Lamb – Secretary



*Who will feed the kids this weekend?*

The Jim Click Millions for Tucson Raffle 2020 Edition has launched! **This year Mr. Click is raffling off a 2020 Ford F-150 Platinum truck as the grand prize.** Second prize is two first-class, round-trip airline tickets anywhere in the world, and third prize is \$5,000. Ticket prices are one for \$25 or five for \$100. ALL PROCEEDS FROM TICKET SALES STAY WITH THE NEW SPIRIT BLESSINGS IN A BACKPACK PROGRAM.

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.**

Contact Laurie Bernard at [lbernard2008@hotmail.com](mailto:lbernard2008@hotmail.com) or New Spirit Lutheran Church for more information.



# New Spirit Lutheran Church

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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 and John Lukehart for digging around the backflow to determine where the pipes run so that we can replace them.***

***SHOUT OUT - To the instructors, leading the classes for “The Story”.***

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)</p> <p>9:00 am Arise to Praise (Spirited Contemporary Worship)</p> <p>10:15 – 11:00 am Sunday School for all ages</p> <p>11:00 am Traditions (Classic Hymns &amp; Liturgies)</p> <p>You can currently watch services Sundays on YouTube.</p>	<p><b><i>How to contact us:</i></b></p> <p>New Spirit Lutheran Church 8701 E. Old Spanish Trail Tucson, AZ 85710</p> <p><b>Phone:</b> (520) 296-2461</p> <p><b>E-Mail:</b> <a href="mailto:NewSpiritLutheranTucson@yahoo.com">NewSpiritLutheranTucson@yahoo.com</a></p> <p><b>Website:</b> <a href="http://newspiritlutherantucson.org">newspiritlutherantucson.org</a></p>
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