

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.*

October 2025

Dear Church,

I find myself torn with what to write in this month's newsletter. There is so much going on. There is a heaviness being felt by many, right now. There is also excitement and anticipation for many as we head into the end of the year. We have much to look forward to as we enter the final months of 2025.



Sunday, October 26th will be when we commemorate the Reformation. That will certainly be a very busy weekend. Friday, there is a funeral for Lis. Saturday, we will once again host Trunk or Treat. Then Sunday we commemorate the Reformation. It is in part in the example of the Reformation that has given me hope lately. In the Reformation we see people that took a stand in the face of injustice and exploitation. The leaders of the Reformation also took advantage of the most current technology of the time.

When those original reformers started the movement, they were called Protestants. They were the protesters of the powers at that time. We will commemorate the Reformation while also asking ourselves are we truly living into the heritage of the Reformation. They were committed to proclaiming the liberating gospel of the grace found through Jesus. A grace that we cannot and do not earn, but that is freely given through God's love for us.

We are in that same "business" of the reformation. Maybe this is even more true today than it was 5 or 10 years ago. I look out my window, or look at the news, and see the same things you all see. I see a world crying out for meaning, for love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The very things that Paul tells us are the fruits of the Spirit. The same Spirit that drove the reformers to do what they did. The same Spirit that is now with us in our time and in our context.

The Reformation was not a one-time historical event but is a movement that continues today. We must take bold stands like Luther, Melancthon, Zwingli, and Knox took born out of their understanding of the freeing grace of Jesus. Like those great Reformers, we must also embrace the technology of the time. We must spread the message of God's love we have been entrusted with in all that we do. The Reformers knew they were up against a powerful opponent and that there was great risk. Yet, they continued. They continued to speak out. They continued to distribute their ideas far and wide. It's our turn now.

Look, I get it. I have asked a lot of you this year, and to be honest since I became your pastor. Each time you have risen to the challenge and surpassed the original objective. I pray that I am wrong in what I am about to say. Deep in my soul I feel that we are entering a time of great challenge. There are forces out there that are using Jesus and Christianity as a tool of empire, a tool to promote hate, a tool to exclude, a tool to justify things that go against the teachings to love God and love neighbor. These forces aim to convince people that the way of Jesus is not based out of love but is instead based in the very things Jesus was tempted with in the wilderness. This is the form of "Christianity" that is speaking the loudest right now. This is what has aligned itself with those in power. It will also be what at least American Christianity is known as, unless. Unless we start to use our voices more. Unless we start to distribute the message of love we have been given. Unless we stop being afraid to invite people to come and experience a place where God's love is made real. Unless we stop giving ourselves excuses not to talk to people. Unless we rise up like the reformers of old.

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Martin Luther could not have done the Reformation all on his own. He certainly was the spark that started it that fateful day he posted the 95 Thesis, but he needed others to carry out the movement. He needed the printing press and those that knew how to operate it. He needed the folks that distributed his printed words. He needed Philip Melanchthon to write his words down so that they could be spread. He needed people and others to step up to help lead the movement. Eventually there were disagreements and some splits between the groups based on theological understands of things like the sacraments yet in the spirit of taking a stand to free people through the understanding that we are saved by grace the reformers were united. They each used the gifts they had been given to help spread the movement of the reformation.

Now it is our time. We need those that are going to share the message God has given us. We need people that are going to share our social media postings. We need people that will take our invitations out to their neighbors and those they cross paths with. We need people that are going to continue to financial support what the Spirit is doing here at New Spirit. We need people that are going to serve on the committees that make ministry happen. We need you to step into the long tradition of reformation.

In the liturgical rite of Affirmation of Baptism, each person wishing to affirm their baptism is asked "Do you renounce all the forces of evil, the devil, and all his empty promises". We can see some of those empty promises by looking at what temptations were put before Jesus in the wilderness. The Affirmation of Baptism continues with "Do you intend to continue in the covenant God made with you in Holy Baptism: to live among God's faithful people, to hear his Word and share in his supper, to proclaim the good news of God in Christ through word and deed, to serve all people, following the example of our Lord Jesus, and to strive for justice and peace in all the earth?" (Lutheran Book of Worship, aka LBW, aka the Green hymnal, p. 199-201).

It is time for each of us to live into the "I Do, and I ask God to help and guide me" response to those questions. We can no longer allow our voice to be drowned out. We can no longer rephrase the response to "I Do, and I ask God to help and guide others to do the work". Each of us has a role in this, regardless of age, stage in life, etc.

Let us each as individuals and as community boldly step into our reformation moment.

Pastor Hartman



October Prayer



Behold, Lord, an empty vessel that needs to be filled. My Lord, fill it. I am weak in faith; strengthen me. I am cold in love; warm me and make me fervent that my love may go out to my neighbor. I do not have a strong and firm faith; at times I doubt and am unable to trust you altogether. O Lord, help me. Strengthen my faith and trust in you. In you I have sealed the treasures of all I have. I am poor; you are rich and did come to be merciful to the poor. I am a sinner; you are upright. With me there is an abundance of sin; in you is the fullness of righteousness. Therefore, I will remain with you who I can receive but to whom I may not give. Amen. (prayer by Martin Luther)

What Is It about New Spirit Lutheran Church – In A Few Words (Or so)

It started as a thought in their head – what if we could get a group of us together and start something that would reach beyond the walls of New Spirit with a positive impact on the life of others? The thought became a whisper in another's ear, and a smile on both their faces. That whisper of an idea was overheard by others as they entered the church for Sunday services, stayed afterwards for some fellowship, or maybe while attending Bible study or another get together. Comments like "oh, I don't know how to do that", or "I wish I could join you; it sounds like something I might enjoy" were heard.



And with a soft touch of a caring hand on a shoulder, a smile and a glint in the eyes, you heard "that's ok, you don't need to know how, we will teach you and help you along the way". "We have everything you will need, no need to buy or bring anything". "Please join us – it will have an impact on so many others beyond New Spirit". "Just come and see – we will even have food there!". You also heard others saying, "how can I help", or "I have something that you could use for that", "when and where?", or "go talk to so-and-so, they're the ones putting this together".

And so, it started. Yes, another caring ministry here in New Spirit, like so many already in place and looking to expand our outreach to others. This is New Spirit – a reflection of how the Holy Spirit works within each of us to share our love, compassion and care for others through our actions.

And when I look back and see how I have changed by participating in some of the ministries here at New Spirit, I realize that the Holy Spirit within me guided me into action to share my love and compassion with others.

New Spirit

Sharing & Caring

Holy Spirit

Do Something

Lorrie Firth

The Spirit at New Spirit Matters

That's the theme of our stewardship appeal for 2026. In the coming weeks we will celebrate how the Spirit has moved to make great things happen at New Spirit in the past two years. That includes the creation of new ministries and the amazing growth of existing ones. We'll talk about our vision and opportunities for the future. And most importantly, we'll talk about your vital part in the ministries of New Spirit.



Together, we've created a synergy, a momentum, a SPIRIT that feels exciting and irresistible! Through New Spirit, we are making an impact on people's lives and our community that's greater than any one of us could do on our own! So as you prepare your hearts for Commitment Sunday on November 16, we ask that you reflect on why New Spirit matters to you and how the impact of your continued financial support can strengthen the SPIRIT we share with others.

WOMEN'S MINISTRY

A reminder that the Women in Ministry group will meet on Wednesday, October 8, at 1:30 pm in the library .

We welcome continuing members and all the women at New Spirit to come and study with us.



A Lasting Act of Stewardship

Every time Ron and I would visit my dad in Wichita Falls, Texas, my father would ask, "Have you created a will yet?" And he would admonish us for not being proactive with our lives. Most of us tend to avoid dealing with end-of-life subjects. It's easy to put planning off for another day because we think we have time. While 70% of Americans consider making a will important, only about 40% have actually followed through in creating one.

We witness every day what little control we have over the future. So, finally Ron and I met with an attorney a couple of years ago to create a living trust. Not only was it important that we took care of our children and grandchildren, but it was essential to us that we remembered New Spirit in our will. Matthew reminds us that, "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Our hearts have been with New Spirit for many years. We cherish our New Spirit family and the ministries that are so impactful to the community. We want to see New Spirit grow and thrive in bringing the Gospel to a hurting world.

Our consistent giving to New Spirit reflects our hearts. Remembering New Spirit in our will is our lasting act of stewardship. New Spirit can use our future gift for special projects to benefit our siblings in Christ and to sustain vital ministry. Have you remembered New Spirit in your end-of-life estate planning? If you would like more information on how to make a lasting gift to New Spirit, a member of the Stewardship Committee would be happy to meet with you and financial/legal advisors to discuss opportunities for you to consider.



Cathy Cermak

ENDING AT THE BEGINNING.

As Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's time as Presiding Bishop comes to a close, we give thanks for her ministry. Officially, Presiding Bishop Eaton's time as Presiding Bishop ended September 30th and Presiding Bishop-Elect Yehiel Curry term begins October 4th. We look forward to Presiding Bishop-Elect Yehiel Curry's time as Presiding Bishop, he will be installed as Presiding Bishop on October 4th. For now, let us hear Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton's final words to the church originally published in Living Lutheran.

"ENDING AT THE BEGINNING"

I started my ministry as presiding bishop with these four emphases: We are church. We are Lutheran. We are church together. We are church for the sake of the world. I will end as I began.

We are church. There is no other institution on earth whose reason for being is the proclamation of the gospel. "It is also taught that at all times there must be and remain one holy, Christian church. It is the assembly of all believers among whom the gospel is purely preached and the holy sacraments are administered according to the gospel" (Augsburg Confession, Article VII). That's it. The works we do in service to the world are important, but they are not the essence of the church. The ELCA does not exist in order to work for justice. Rather, because we are nourished by word and sacraments, the ELCA is free and empowered to do so.

The church is also marvelously intricate and interconnected. "We, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually we are members one of another" (Romans 12:5). There is no such thing as a solitary Christian. God's love for us through Christ and poured into our hearts by the Spirit is for each of us. But each of us is just one member of the body of Christ. We understand the church in the same way.

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"This church shall seek to function as people of God through congregations, synods, and the churchwide organization, all of which shall be interdependent. Each part, while fully the church, recognizes that it is not the whole church and therefore lives in an interdependent relationship with the others" (ELCA "Constitutions, Bylaws and Continuing Resolutions" 8.11.).

We are Lutheran. The average Lutheran in the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) is a woman in Tanzania. There are more Lutherans in Ethiopia, Indonesia and Madagascar than there are in the ELCA. The LWF has 150 member churches in 99 countries. What binds us together? Certainly not one culture or cuisine. Rather, it is the clear witness of the gospel that sets us free. "It is taught that we cannot obtain forgiveness of sin and righteousness before God through our merit, work, or satisfactions, but that we receive forgiveness of sin and become righteous before God out of grace for Christ's sake through faith ..." (Augsburg Confession, Article IV).

This is revolutionary. The standards of the world by which we are measured, or we measure others, are a figment. We don't claim perfection for the church. We're not there. But as Martin Luther said, "This life therefore is not righteousness but growth in righteousness, not health but healing, not being but becoming, not rest but exercise. We are not yet what we shall be, but we are growing toward it, the process is not yet finished, but it is going on, this is not the end, but it is the road. All does not yet gleam in glory, but all is being purified" ("Defense and Explanation of All the Articles"). We know there is law and gospel, that we are saint and sinner, that we are bound and free, and we entrust that all to God.

We are church together. Paul wrote that we do not live to ourselves. We live in a time when fear is used to separate us. This is the tool of every authoritarian regime. The church is different. The Spirit calls, gathers and keeps the whole church on earth. We belong to God, we belong to each other, and we belong to the world.

We are church for the sake of the world. We are not only freed from sin, we are freed for service to the neighbor. Here is where the essence of the church—the proclamation of the gospel—gives power and shape to the work we do in Jesus' name. We are church for the sake of the world not out of obligation or for reward but out of love.

So there it is, dear church, my farewell address. We each have this ministry for a season. My season as presiding bishop has ended. Bishop-elect Yehiel Curry's season is about to begin. Pray for him, his family and the churchwide staff.

But be assured that the season for the ELCA is not over. God hasn't finished with this church yet.



Fellowship Dinner

Our next dinner will be on October 15th. We will do a pot luck dinner again this month. Linda Grochowski and Sarah Drath have volunteered to organize the last two dinners of the year. We will be posting a sign up sheet on the bulletin board in the Narthex for October dinner. If you are interested in helping to continue these dinners, please let Linda, Sarah or Nancy in the office know. Thanks.



TRUNK OR TREAT:

New Spirit will be hosting Trunk or Treat this year on Saturday, Oct 25, from 5-7 pm and we will be making hotdogs for the families that come. Look for signup sheets for participating and for helping with the cooking and games. We are collecting candy and give away items. Our wish is to collect 100,000 pieces. You can make your donation by dropping it off on Sunday or taking it to the office Monday through Thursday between 8 and 3.

For more information contact Karen Colwell at klcolwell76@gmail.com.

TUCSON PRIDE:

New Spirit will be participating in the event Saturday, November 22nd. Witness and Welcome Team is working on details to show our LGBTQIA+ brothers and sisters that they are loved, no strings attached. We are participating as part of A LOT (Affirming Lutherans of Tucson) composed of 8 different Lutheran ministries in Tucson.

Contact Carol Johnston at syracarol@gmail.com if you would like to volunteer.



From the Music Ministry

The fall season is my favorite time of the year. The late monsoons are never too late—it is so refreshing to welcome the rain and the desert smells it creates. There's a sense of renewal in the air, and that spirit of renewal is also present in our music ministry.

I'm excited to share that several of our Praise Team members have returned, and the joy of making music together again is truly energizing our worship. It feels good to hear those familiar voices lifting the congregation.

We're also preparing for our **second annual production of *Bending Towards the Light: A Jazz Nativity***. This unique and uplifting concert will take place on December 13 and 14 (5 PM and 7 PM, respectively), and tickets are now available! Visit www.jazznativity.org and click the Tucson link. There's even an **early-bird discount** if you purchase your tickets by **October 15**—a great way to reserve your seats early and support the ministry.



Another exciting development: as New Spirit begins moving toward **live streaming services**, our music team is working harder and putting in longer rehearsal hours so that we can sound our very best.

Finally, if you've ever felt the nudge to sing with us on Sundays, I warmly invite you to join. Please come and talk with me or with any of our music team members—we'd love to have you share your voice and your spirit.

In faith and music,
Robert Encila

October & November Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations

10/02 Jakob Rettig

10/03 Chip Green

10/04 Mary Lou Rex
Robert & Nancy Daliege
(Anniversary)

10/07 Sue Trumbull

10/15 Mary Henkel

10/19 Sharon Dobbs
Nicholas Thayse

10/23 Mike Aldrich & Brenda Noli
(Anniversary)

10/24 Judy McFarland
Torrey Thatcher

10/25 Tobias Hartman

10/30 Lily Thatcher

10/31 Lorrie Firth



11/06 Doug Butler

11/07 Barbara Rebok

11/09 Camellia Thatcher

11/10 Hope & Torrey Thatcher
(Anniversary)

11/11 Edna Walton
Cathy Cermak

11/12 Hope Thatcher

11/17 Pastor Hartman

11/18 Steve Harris

11/21 Rick & Lorrie Firth
(Anniversary)

11/23 Vicky Harris

11/26 Chip & Colleen Green
(Anniversary)

11/27 Heather Thatcher

11/28 Amy Rahe

Shout-Outs

SHOUT OUT - To Kitty Glanz and Carol Johnston for initiating the Monday quilting program.

SHOUT OUT - To the Gary Grochowski for getting all the bids for K-Hall roof.

SHOUT OUT - To Marty Lueking for research that gave us guidance in purchasing live streaming equipment.

SHOUT OUT - To Bob Daliege for weekly communion set up.

SHOUT OUT - To the congregation members for their support of Sunday services and church events.





Who will feed the kids this weekend?

Steele	70
ERICKSON	140
SOLENGTOM	33
HENRY	55
FORD	65
	<u>363</u>



WE WILL!

Being well nourished vs. hunger can have a profound impact on a child's academic performance, school attendance, behavior and health. This is the vision of Blessings in a Backpack and New Spirit – happy, healthy children who can focus on school performance, attend regularly, and demonstrate academic success because of having full bellies. New Spirit provides snack packs to those who might not have enough to eat on the weekend.

Our weekly packing for the new school year began on August 19th. New Spirit's collection of school supplies over the summer has been delivered to all 5 schools and 1 after-school program.

The 363 children we currently serve are from five east side elementary schools: Steele at 700 S. Sarnoff Drive; Erickson at 6750 E. Stella Road; Henry at 650 N. Igo Way; Ford at 8001 E. Stella Road; and Soleng Tom at 10520 E. Camino Quince.

Want to volunteer to be a member of our team? Contact Laurie Bernard at lbernard2008@hotmail.com with questions. For regular contributions, please make your tax-deductible check to Blessings in a Backpack. You can contribute on New Spirit's website, drop in the offering plate, drop off at the church office, or drop directly in to the mail to BIB Lockbox, PO Box 950291, Louisville, KY 40295. **Remember to put Steele Elementary on the memo line.**

HOMELESS BLESSINGS

NEXT EVENT OCTOBER 11TH

1PM TO 3PM



We've been busy this summer. Sorting clothing, accepting donations, delivering supplies to San Juan Baptista for the Nogales, Mexico mission, helping several people with household supplies from our friends at Tanque Verde Lutheran Church, and feeding our neighbors are just a part of our outreach at New Spirit. One of our housed couples welcomed their daughter in September!

On the 2nd Saturday of each month, we share hygiene products, tarps, backpacks, blankets, socks, underwear, shade hats, umbrellas, cool cloths, clothing, shoes, and haircuts, along with hot home-cooked meals for 50 to 70 unhoused/financially insecure brothers and sisters. We partner with local care providers to work towards housing, mental health support, HIV/Hepatitis C testing, and even liaison with the Office of the Police Examiner.

Church members are provided with bags of essential items to share out of their cars with people on the street reaching another 100 unhoused neighbors per month.

We also volunteer with the City of Tucson Housing First MDOT Care Packet Assembly once a month for sharing at homeless camps.

As of August 1, 2025, we have emergency food boxes for families and singles. In the event that you are unable to obtain a food box from a Community Food Bank pantry, or an emergency bag from ICS located on our campus, please call the office at 296-2461 if you need help.

This vital ministry has grown to impact/serve/care for over 2,000 people annually. Want to volunteer and make a difference in someone's life? Contact Laurie Bernard at lbernard2008@hotmail.com with questions.

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 contribute on our website, New Spirit Lutheran Church, just click on the donate button, 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.

New Spirit Lutheran Church

8701 E. Old Spanish Trail
Tucson, AZ 85710

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 Service

Wednesdays

9:00 am Pray Without Ceasing Service

You can currently watch each week's message on YouTube.

How to contact us:

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