

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.*

September 2020

A YEAR LOST TO LOCUSTS?

There's a verse from the prophet Joel that's stuck in my mind for years. Israel has suffered through a horrible and devastating infestation of locusts followed by drought. The people call out to God for mercy. God responds. God makes his presence known to them and declares that relief is on the way. He promises that the land will be green and bountiful again. Not only does God promise a turnaround in their circumstances, he makes this straightforward promise: God says, through Joel, "I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten" (Joel 2:25).

"I will repay you for the years the locusts have eaten."

It's not just that the future will be better. It's that God is going to ... what? ... tack on years to their lives to make up for the years of suffering? Or make the next few years so spectacular that Israel will feel they came out even? We don't know precisely what God had in mind with these words. But they're a powerful reminder of just who we're dealing with when we're dealing with our God. Or, it's probably better to say, we're reminded just who's dealing with us.

This is the God who created and continues to create the world. This is the author of time. This is God who is limitless in compassion as well as in power. This is our God who holds our years in his loving hands.

Which leads me to ask ... How's this particular year going for you? Are you one of the many, many people who find themselves saying they just want 2020 to end? Does it feel like a lost year, not much more than one disaster after another? Have the events of this year—pandemic, economic free-fall, schools closing, weather events, lost loved ones and lost time with loved ones—felt like an inescapable horde of locusts eating their way through your days and nights, leaving nothing green behind?

Well, God is going to more than make up for the limitations of this year, its griefs and its losses. God is going to repay us for this year the "locusts" have eaten.

God is going to bless us with life, joyful and fulfilling life, that will make what we've lost look like a speck in the rearview mirror. We've seen it in Jesus Christ and we're given it in Jesus Christ. Life abundant and eternal. Life in the presence of God.

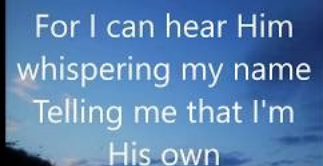
Remember these words from John's vision in Revelation, a glimpse of what's to come:

And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying,
"See, the home of God is among mortals.
He will dwell with them;
they will be his peoples,
and God himself will be with them;
he will wipe every tear from their eyes.
Death will be no more;
mourning and crying and pain will be no more,
for the first things have passed away."

And the one who was seated on the throne said, "See, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this, for these words are trustworthy and true." (Revelation 21:3-5)

Friends, these words are trustworthy and true. Our hope at all times is in the trustworthy and true promises of God. Our reliance on God is just more obvious during some times than others. This is one of those times when our hope gets a chance to shine. May your hope and trust in God be strong and shining. May it light up not just your own life but also the lives of everyone around you.

In Christ,
Pastor Carol



For I can hear Him
whispering my name
Telling me that I'm
His own

GET TOGETHER WITH PASTOR CAROL (IN PERSON OR NOT!)

Times of pastoral transition in congregations are always difficult. A beloved and familiar face, personality, and way of doing things are abruptly replaced with a different face, an unfamiliar personality, and some changes in the rhythm of church life.

For New Spirit, all this is happening in the middle of a shutdown forced by a rampant virus. It's a bit much, isn't it?

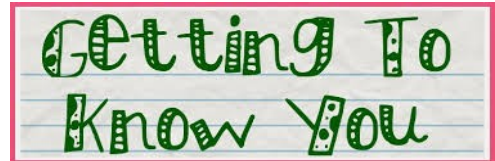
Pastor Fred and I want to be sure everyone is aware that the plan is for Pastor Alan to come back to New Spirit for a proper farewell celebration as soon as that can be done fully and safely. He also plans to confirm the waiting confirmation candidates. Let's all pray that the day when we can do that comes quickly!

Along with the challenge of saying goodbye in a pandemic comes the challenge of saying hello. How do Pastor Fred and I get to know everyone at New Spirit when we can't sit and chat over coffee after worship or hear about your lives in office visits?

Well, one way, for those of you who are able, is through our Sunday morning 10:00am Holy Communion and Coffee Hour time (see article on page 3 for more on that). And another is the invitation to meet with me, Pastor Carol, by phone, Zoom, or in-person-at-a-distance at church. I've had wonderful conversations with a number of people already, and my goal is to meet with everyone who's willing by the end of the year.

Nancy DiFebbo, our Church Administrator, has graciously agreed to handle scheduling for this, so please call her at 520-296-2461 or email her at nancy@newspiritlutherantucson.org.

I look forward to meeting with you!
-Pastor Carol



REOPENING WORKING GROUP TO START PLANNING

A lot of people are asking: When will we start up some kind of on-site worship? Some churches in our area are meeting with strict rules and limited numbers. When and how is it best for New Spirit to follow suit?

If you'd like to be part of the planning process for a phased reopening at our church, consider volunteering for a newly forming Reopening Working Group. There is plenty of thinking and work to be done, and your participation can make a big difference.



If you're interested, please let Pastor Carol know by email at carol@newspiritlutherantucson.org, or you can call Nancy DiFebbo, our Church Administrator, at 520-296-2461.

September Birthday & Anniversary Celebrations

09/01 Paul Walton	09/18 Susan Armstrong
09/03 Bruce & Sarah Drath (anniversary)	09/19 Renee Geiger
09/05 John Lukeart,	09/22 Mary Jane Beardmore
09/09 Cekai Maple	09/27 Barb Verthein
09/11 Archie Burke	09/30 Carol Lukeart, Wayne Stephens
09/15 Paul & Becky Hedstrom (anniversary)	



A NEW NORMAL FOR SUNDAYS (FOR NOW)

While we're apart, please remember that you can watch our weekly worship service on YouTube by typing "New Spirit Lutheran Church Tucson" in the search bar. Once you find New Spirit, you can click on the red "subscribe" button and then the little bell to get notified when a new video is posted. Or simply go to our website's homepage and click on the link for the latest worship service.

Worship videos are posted by early Sunday morning. You may find it best to set a time to watch in order to stay in the habit of "going to church." But the videos are available any time.

Also, every Sunday morning at 10:00 for the time being, we're gathering via Zoom for Holy Communion & Coffee Hour. Have a little bread and some wine or grape juice at hand, as we start with a brief time of worship with shared communion. Then we move into 25-30 minutes of conversation, both as a full group and in smaller break-out groups. It's a good way to stay connected and even get to know people you've never talked with at length before.

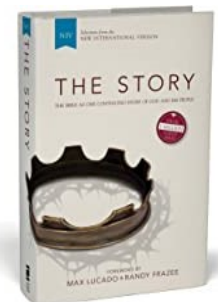


To participate, please email Pastor Carol or Pastor Fred to get the link and password to join the Zoom meeting. Not sure how to Zoom? We can send you instructions, too. And there are people who know what they're doing who are ready to talk you through the process if needed.

See you Sunday!

THE STORY

If you've read the Bible all the way through, congratulations! It's not easy to do. The many story lines, characters, and obscure historical references can be a challenge for any reader. But, yet, it's so helpful to get a grasp of the overall sweep of the story contained in the Bible—the amazing and glorious story of God's history with humankind. From creation in Genesis to John's end-time vision in Revelation, God carries on a real, lively relationship with the world and the people he brings into being, loves, and redeems.



Starting September 20, we—God's people at New Spirit Lutheran Church, along, we hope, with new friends from the community around us—will dive into Scripture as we read together through *The Story*. *The Story* is the Bible abridged and put into chronological order. The text of Scripture is connected by brief, italicized sections to help the reader follow the narrative through transitions. We'll read from Genesis through Revelation in 31 weeks, with a manageable number of pages per week.

In a disconnected season of our life as a community of faith, this is a way we can all be on the same page, grown-ups and children, everyone reading the same stories at the same time.

Throughout the week, we'll offer conversation opportunities for people to get together online or in-person-at-a-distance to talk about what we're learning about God and about ourselves through our reading. We also want to invite people who aren't yet part of New Spirit to join us in reading and conversation.

Watch for information about picking up your copy of *The Story* in September. We'll deliver to anyone who can't swing by church for pick-up.

More information to come! In the meantime, if you'd like to see more about *The Story*, take a look at thestory.com. It's going to be a memorable year!

WOMEN IN MINISTRY, JULY 15, BIBLE STUDY

The meeting was held in the Fellowship Hall at New Spirit: 2 persons to a table with masks. It was uplifting to see and hear our sisters in faith in person.

The study was Part Two of the summer Bible study series "Just Love," based on the story of Zacchaeus, a rich and chief tax-collector, in Luke 19.

We shared memories of the little song "Zacchaeus," with the motions some of us had learned as children in Bible or Sunday School.

Zacchaeus was excited for the chance to see Jesus in person and perhaps hear what he had to say in passing. (Reminded us of our joy at being together.)

The study led us to the part of the story that developed between Jesus and Zacchaeus when they were at Zacchaeus's home. The friendship that developed was life-changing for Zacchaeus. His eyes, mind, and heart were opened to another view of life and of those around him. "Just Love" enters his life as he acknowledges his sin and offers to make amends. The change of generosity was in his heart. Not everyone in the community had the same feelings about this development—"All who saw it began to grumble..." We explored the grumbings, attitudes, and old habits from our experiences and what that looks like in our lives, in our family or neighborhood, and in our church community.

We explored what the ELCA Social Statement "The Church and Criminal Justice" is and how that might encourage in the practice of "Just Love," restorative justice.

From the story of a wee little man long ago to us today, God is reaching out through us for "Just Love" to be for the whole human race.

We were surprised and excited to see Pastors Carol and Fred for a few minutes and introduce the group to them.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT IN AN UNPRECEDENTED TIME

We all hope this newsletter finds you safe and being able to navigate the continuing pandemic restrictions. We all adapt to change in different ways and I have been amazed at how well many of us have done. I thank Pastor Carol and Pastor Fred for their diligence and creativity in expanding Sunday Worship online to include Zoom Communion and virtual social networking/coffee sessions.

I also appreciate everyone's continued support of New Spirit's financial needs and the ongoing upkeep efforts done by many of you. Change takes persistence, patience, and creativity to successfully navigate the challenges of each day. I am confident that the scientific community will be successful in developing a treatment and a vaccine that will allow us once again to live our more normal existences. But this will take some time, so, as we continue on with various limits, remember that past generations successfully got through similar challenges, as will we.

Dave Grundstrom, Council President



Over the years we have been collecting pull tabs for the Ronald McDonald house. They have notified us that they have recently stopped collection of these. Please do not turn them in until further notice. Thank you. Gloria Burke



Thank you all my dear New Spirit family for all your prayers and phone calls. We will be moved to Villa Hermosa at Speedway and Wilmot by the end of August.

I have some advice that I want to share from an article by Dr. Ed Carlson, the doctor who delivered me. He said "Look on the bright side, seek God, help others, count your blessings, stop and think and we will see the great number of blessings we have had and still have. If you have a chance to do a good deed, do it now as you may not have another chance. When you go to church, open the doors of your heart and the Lord will dwell within. Be sure to keep the doors open 7 days a week and make happiness a continual thing." Good advice in 1931 and still good forever. Gloria Burke



Most people can't wait for the weekend. Kids at risk of hunger can't wait for it to be over.

Did you know 13 million kids in America won't have enough food to eat this weekend? That's one in five kids who will eat meals at school during the week but be without access to affordable, nutritious food on Saturday and Sunday. The consequences are much more than a growling stomach. Hunger can cause many physical health problems. It can also shorten a child's attention span, lower their IQ, and keep them from making good grades.

To ensure the kids in our community have full bellies over the weekend, Blessings in a Backpack sends them home on Fridays with snack packs full of satisfying and nutritional food. Who will feed the kids this weekend?

We will! This school year, we will be feeding **289** children from Erickson, Ford, Steele, and Henry Elementary Schools, providing snack packs for them to take home on the weekend. Typical items include macaroni 'n' cheese box, canned sausages, chicken or tuna, oatmeal, canned beans or pasta, cereal, hot cocoa, canned vegetable, and fruit cup.

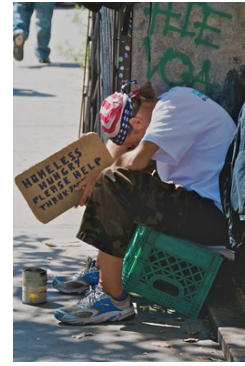
The Jim Click Millions for Tucson Raffle 2020 Edition has launched! **This year Mr. Click is raffling off a 2020 Ford F-150 Platinum truck as the grand prize.** Second prize is two first-class, round-trip airline tickets anywhere in the world, and third prize is \$5,000. Ticket prices are one for \$25 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.**

You can designate our program through your Fry's Community Rewards program. A percentage of what you spend on groceries can be donated to Blessings in a Backpack. Sign up online or in your local Fry's store. Our account number is XL431. Help feed the kids as you feed yourself!

Our team members are hard at work to keep up with the added students each week. Learn more about what we do and how you can help. **We need volunteers to help with fund raising, planning, purchasing, packing, and delivery.** Contact Laurie Bernard at lbernard2008@hotmail.com.

"Like" our page on Facebook ***Blessings at New Spirit Lutheran Church***



HOMELESS BLESSINGS UPDATE

It's tough on the streets. For some, it's tough to keep a roof over their head. Their stories are heartbreaking. Mental health, alcohol, and drug issues are just part of the problem. These are also people who have just had a perfect storm of health, employment, and financial issues and now find themselves homeless or close to it.

Our event the 2nd Saturday of each month has been limited to a couple volunteers and scaled back items as we all struggle through this COVID-19 pandemic. The turnout has been low, but we make up for that by preparing drawstring bags with basic hygiene items— toothpaste, toothbrush, wipes, lotion, band aids, antiseptic lotion, and pain reliever. In addition to flashlights and batteries, we also include extra food items. These bags can then be carried in your car and passed out to any needy person you see on the street. We are determined to reach as many of this vulnerable population as ever. If you are interested in obtaining a few bags to pass out, please contact us.

IF YOU ARE A THRIVENT FINANCIAL MEMBER, PLEASE CONSIDER SPONSORING AN ACTION TEAM FOR HOMELESS BLESSINGS. WE WILL RECEIVE \$250 TO HELP TOWARDS THIS MINISTRY.

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.

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

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 Craig Geiger for maintaining the Columbarium.

SHOUT OUT - To Ken Dobbs and John Lukehart for spending time to help the Leak Detection company and the plumber locate the water leak in the garden area.

Please submit words of thanks and praise to Nancy at nancy@newspiritlutheran.com to be placed in the newsletter by the 15th of each month. Thank you!

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