



## **2020 Council Reports**

Presented at the Congregational Meeting  
September 27, 2020—Held by ZOOM meeting  
Prepared by Staff  
and Church Council Representatives

## Education Committee

**Council Representative:** Currently Open

### Goals & Activities achieved for 2019-2020

- Attended camps throughout the year at El Camino Pines, engaging with other local Lutheran youth, and expanded in their faith journey.
- Adult bible studies and catechism and Amplify continue to be offered in a variety of times and media (like Zoom) throughout the week.
- Confirmation classes were held consistently on Wednesday evenings throughout the year.
- Vacation Bible School in a Box delivered to families this Summer

### Projected Goals for 2020-2021

- We continue with Sunday School/Amplify, Confirmation and Vacation Bible School.
- Offer **First Communion** course for those interested.
- We will be working toward establishing a **Faith Formation program** that addresses spiritual growth at all ages and stages of life.

## Endowment Committee

**Council Representative: Joseph Bulock**

Committee: Gail Beeker, Joe Bulock, Moeed Khan, Andrew Mansmann, Wayne Rickert

The Mission Endowment Fund was established to support outreach, locally and around the world, above and beyond the programs supported through the annual budget. The Fund is supported through gifts and bequests and is a legacy of our faith in New Hope's role with future generations.

The Endowment Committee is responsible for growing the Endowment Fund and for recommending grants for council approval.

The Committee funded three grant proposals in 2020, \$3,000 to Community Conscience in Thousand Oaks, \$1,000 to the California Lutheran University Counselling Center and \$950 to Lutheran Retreats Camps and Conferences.

The committee has determined that the Fund has sufficient investment returns to support another round of grants to be disbursed in 2021 and will start accepting grant proposals this fall.

The Committee evaluates the following considerations when reviewing requests:

- Promotion of Christian principles

- Number of people impacted

- Benefit on long term stewardship

- Congregational, community, synodical or global needs addressed

- Other funding available to the recipient

Grant Distribution Request Forms and other information about the Fund are available on the church's website and in the office.

Feel free to contact a Committee member if you have any interest in the organizations that might want grants or if you want to know how to include the Endowment Fund in your short term or long term giving plans.

Current Value [June 2020]                      \$114,362

## Evangelism & Outreach Committee

**Council Representative: Mary Gallagher**

While the 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic continues to challenge the methods in which we can spread the Word of God, it also has allowed us to explore new and creative ways to share His love with our neighbors. There are so many talented church members who selflessly volunteer their time and expertise to create a loving and growing message of God's existence within our community.

### Goals and Activities Achieved in 2019-2020

- The Worship Team has expanded the recording and broadcasting of our weekly sermons. The message can now be accessed thru our website, the Facebook page, and on YouTube. There has been an amazing amount of effort put into the production of these sermons. These efforts have culminated in a very professional and uplifting weekly message that provides community updates, spiritual nourishment and melodic enjoyment.
- Although the Recovery Groups that use our building have had to find alternative accommodations because of the Covid-19 Restrictions, they continue to communicate with the Church Office in hopes of returning to our building once the pandemic is contained.
- We continue to utilize the Ventura County Star every Saturday to announce the upcoming service and sermon theme.
- A large banner was created and erected for the front of the Church to inform the drive-by community of our online presence and location.
- The Bible Study Groups have expanded to an online ZOOM format. This expansion has allowed us to include participants Nationwide and even overseas. This change has not only increased the numbers of participants, but allows us to include church members that have re-located, are traveling, as well as visitors that may be underserved in their home communities.
- Terry Paulson has spearheaded a group of Heavenly Hikers. This group meets twice a week to hike the many trails located here in the Conejo Valley while sharing faith and appreciating the glory and beauty of God's creation.
- Lighting and recording capabilities in the Sanctuary have been upgraded to enhance the new digital formats we are using.
- Our website has been totally updated and enhanced thanks to the tireless efforts by Brian Gibbons and Laurie Scott. The new website includes a new address ([newhopeagoura.org](http://newhopeagoura.org)) as well the seamless link from the old site to allow easy access. This new website location has updated photos and community, ELCU, NAMI, Lutheran Social Services (LSS) announcements as well as New Hope Agoura Lutheran Church updates.

## Evangelism Outreach Committee *(continued)*

- Upcoming Webinar: The Use of Language – Agreeing and Disagreeing in Love hosted by our Church and led by the Mennonite Center for Peace (October 10, 2020) Open to the community.
- Alpha Program led by Terry and Lorie Paulson was completed in the Fall of 2019.

## Projected Goals for 2020 -2021

- Maintain our strong online presence and continue to look for areas of expansion.
- Continue to meet with council on a monthly basis to assess and update the level of our church activities in line with Covid-19, County and State Safety Guidelines.
- Continue to participate within the community and at any community events to offer the resources that New Hope Agoura Church can provide.
- Resume Movie Nights and continue to look for other activities where community can bond with the New Hope Congregation once the Covid-19 pandemic is contained.

## Financial Committee

**Council Representative/Treasurer: Joseph Bullock**

Financial Secretaries: Gaye Khan, Gary Alwood (Emeritus)

2018 Audit Committee: John Bell, Jim Merrill, Tim Neal, Wayne Rickert

Counting Committee: Calvin Beeker, Joe Bullock, Steve Chew, Kathy Rogers

The Finance Committee is responsible for the finances of the congregation, including all investment and designated funds. The Financial Secretary provides the Treasurer an accounting of all moneys received by the congregation and disburses the funds according to the budget and the instructions of the Congregation Council. The Treasurer provides reports to the Congregation Council monthly and to the congregation annually. A budget was developed and approved by the Congregation in 2020 which included a fund transfer of \$38,242.

### 2019-2020 Highlights

#### Year-to-date Financial Update

The following values indicate a positive financial health through August 31, 2020

Budget	\$ 285,913	(8/12 of total budget)
Donations	\$ 291,535	
Expenses	\$ 273,267	

Donations are above budget due to everyone who has maintained their giving in this unusual time as well as some who accelerated their pledge giving to assist in the early stage of the lockdown

#### Giving Options Increased

As alternatives to in service donations, online giving via PayPal was implemented to augment the previous electronic giving options and through the mail.

#### Government Programs Utilized

The donation value above does not include money received through the Payroll Protection Program. When all reviews were completed by the SBA, we received \$38,116 via the PPP loan. We qualify for full loan forgiveness and our application will be submitted when possible.

#### Mortgage

The mortgage renewal was initiated with the current mortgage holder [Mission Investment Fund]. The decision was made to proceed with a ten-year fixed rate at 5.125%. It will take effect October 1, reducing the monthly payment to \$3,865 from the current \$6,215.

#### 2020-2021 Goals

- Increase giving options
- Investigate investment options
- Implement Audit recommendations

## Fellowship Committee

**Council Representative: Leila Mader**

Committee Members: Linda Barry, Marsha Chew, Jill Fisher, Gail McGinnis, Sandy Hansen, Cindy O'Hare, Sue Poulson, Jane Taschereau, and Rose Topliss

Adjustments were made to the goals and activities planned for this year due to the pandemic. We are hoping to get back to normal before Christmas.

### **Goals and activities achieved 2019-2020**

- Supper's 8
- WELCA Christmas Meeting
- Christmas Dinner
- Lenten Lunch

### **Projected Goals for 2020-2021**

- Supper's 8
- Christmas Dinner
- WELCA Christmas meeting
- Lenten Suppers
- Easter Egg Hunt and Picnic

## Lay Ministry Committee

**Council Representative: Jim Merrill**

Committee Members: Bonnie Bell, Deacon Lynn Bullock, Marsha Chew, Sue Koons, Linda Leland, Lorie Paulson, Marsha Chew

Committee Members are responsible for facilitating communication between the Church Council and the Lay Ministry program leaders; promoting understanding of and commitment to lay ministry in the congregation; coordinating the current Lay Ministry programs (Time and Talent, prayer ministry, prayer shawls); assisting leaders to design new opportunities for lay ministry in this pandemic environment.

*Note: Prayer Ministry is mainly handled through Music and Worship .*

### Goals & Activities achieved for 2019-2020

- Prayer Shawl Ministry is active. We have crocheters, knitters and loomers who make shawls, pocket crosses, hats, and baby and car seat blankets. These items are blessed and prayed over and given to convey blessings for a wedding, birth, or Baptism, or comfort during an illness or loss.
- From September of last year to current, we have given out 19 shawls and 1 baby blanket. We have also given out 11 prayer pockets and 30 pocket prayer crosses.
- Member Care –We continue an e-mail connection with people who offer prayers during Sunday morning Wired Word Zoom meetings letting them know our church supports them in their prayers.

### Goals and Activities for 2020-2021

- We will have a new Lay Ministry chair (Natalie Larkin) as Jim Merrill is moving to another position on Council. Natalie brings gifts in spiritual direction and we look forward to supporting her in new and exciting plans.
- We will continue prayer shawl ministry even though we cannot gather to make shawls. There is still a need for prayer shawls and pockets.

## Operations Committee

**Council Representative:** Gary McGinnis

Committee Members: The Congregation

Responsible for maintaining and making ready all physical plant facilities for all church and outside group activities.

### Goals and activities achieved in 2019-2020

- Upgraded Sanctuary LED lighting (Joe Bullock lead)
- Improvements made to the Sanctuary sound system (Chris Chigaridas lead)
- Repainted the red zone in our driveway
- Repaired sprinklers
- Resolved water leaks at two outdoor faucets
- Installed outdoor faucet locks
- Cleared rain gutters and removed leaves from roof
- Increased building security by rekeying all external and internal door locks
- Hired a parking lot sweeping company for bi-monthly cleaning
- All carpet and floor tile surfaces were professionally steam cleaned
- Six Hand Sanitizing dispensers have been obtained
- Selected new janitorial service to reduce costs and to obtain a better cleaning experience
- Weekly custodial visits were provided by New Hope's volunteer crew until the building was closed to the public in late March. (John Bell lead)
- The janitorial service schedule was reduced in August from weekly cleanings to two cleanings per month as a cost cutting measure. *(This temporary reduction will continue until the building can be reopened.)*

### Projected Goals for 2020-2021

All major items have been addressed and we are now in a maintenance mode

- Perform repairs or replace items, as needed
- Continue with painting projects, as needed

## Social Ministry Committee

Council Representative: Merylee Blair

The focus of Social Ministry is to take New Hope outside our doors and carry Jesus' love to the world.

### Goals & Activities achieved for 2019-2020

- Our Social Ministry programs have seen massive changes due to the pandemic beginning in April. We were the last church to actually serve our food at Holy Trinity to guests before the meals program needed to suspend group operations.
- Services by our partners, Harbor House and LSS, have creatively modified their programs to a lunch/ entree delivery donation service. This will continue until we can again have in person serving safely.
- Many from New Hope have stepped forward to take new directions of help such as the wonderful food & service projects undertaken by our Mansmann Family.
- Our LSS lunch providers at New Hope continue to provide lunches weekly.

### Projected Goals for 2020-2021

- What will the upcoming New Hope Social Ministry look like? I will be looking for ways for us to all to be Jesus' hands and feet, meeting needs outside in our community .
- Prince of Peace Houston is part of our extended church family and we will continue to be there for them.
- We will continue to serve the Lord, meeting folks right where they are, by serving them.

## Staff Ministry Committee

Council Representative: Alison Rowe

### Accomplishments of 2019-2020

- New Youth Protection Training Program selected and Church Council was trained.
- Mid-year “Check-Ins” conducted with staff
- Review of Parish Administrator’s duties and hours worked. Hours were increased from 20 per week to 30 per week for the remainder of 2020

### Projected Goals for 2020-2021

- Implement new approach for goal setting in 2021
- Review Parish Administrators hours to determine continuance of increase.
- Review and communicate time off policies

## Stewardship Committee

**Council Representative: Tom LaVanne**

The pledge campaign in 2019 in support of the 2020 budget fell short, As a result, the budget for 2020 relies on the bountiful donations received during 2018 and 2019.

### **Accomplishments of 2019-2020**

- During the year we engaged in presenting the congregation with emergency preparedness kits. Access to emergency guidelines and checklists was made available on the church website.
- We offered presentations for estate planning and giving consideration to the church as a part of those plans.
- Held numerous community fundraising events in the way of CROP Walk, Alzheimer Walk, NAMI Walk, Lustgarten Walk and Big Brothers, Big Sisters Bowling.

### **Projected Goals for 2020-2021**

The 2020 budget year relied upon the generous receipts from prior years and a savings in expenses. A significant portion of that came from non-pledging units. The 2020 campaign results will form the basis to prepare a budget for 2021. So as to manage the uncomfortable use of using prior year savings for budget preparation, we encourage non-pledging units to make a modest commitment for 2021.

- Continue to look for opportunities to aid the needs of our congregation and community in these strange times of COVID 19.
- Encourage members to continue participation in opportunities that positively impact the needs of the community and world to combat disease, care for the needy and protect the environment.

## Worship and Music Committee

**Council Representative: Sandy Hansen**

Chair: Jax Rains-Turk

Committee Members: Pastor Craig Beeker, Aleta Braxton, Deacon Joe Bullock, Lynn Bullock, David Cohen Eilene Green, Terry Paulson

### Goals and Activities achieved in 2019-2020

#### Pre COVID-19

- Committee met three times
- Continued inviting more members to join the choir
- Continued private prayer options for those needing special prayers
- Continued giving out New Hope coffee mugs to visitors
- Converted to one service at 10:00 a.m.

#### During COVID-19

- Closed the church building to all services, meetings and groups
- Began recording Sunday Worship Services for online viewing
- Began holding all Church meetings online with Zoom, including:
  - Church Council
  - Adult Wired Word Study
  - Monday Women's Bible Study
  - Tuesday Bible Study
  - Tuesday Book Club
  - Confirmation Classes
  - Thursday Men's Group
- Music for Sunday Worship Services was arranged by Aleta Braxton. Small groups rehearsed and sang their portions of the service, recorded each Wednesday morning.
- Delivered Communion packages to members for three "Communion at Home" services,

### Projected Goals for 2020-2021

- Find additional ways to share communion with congregation
- Work on plans to meet in the church building once again when COVID-19 restrictions allow.

## Youth Committee

**Council Representative: Brian Gibbons**

Staff Person: Pastor Scott Fielder

### Goals and Activities achieved for 2019-2020

- Winter camps attended
- Confirmation classes held—continued thru summer
- New youth protection training and training of council in the new material prior to COVID-19
- Learned and shared Zoom

### Projected Goals for 2020-2021

- Assist in the development of the new Faith Formation Committee
- Bring New Child Protection training to the whole congregation
- Send kids to Synod youth gatherings and winter camps through LRCC
- Work on hybrid events when guidelines allow (hybrid in-person and digital)
- Look into options for providing supplemental educational support activities for school age kids

## Development Committee

Council Representative: Chuck Titcomb

### Accomplishments of 2019-2020

- Assisted the Finance Committee on the refinance of the mortgage.
- Assisted with building upgrades including lighting improvements in the sanctuary.

### Projected Goals 2020-2021

- Continue to assist with ratifying and closing the refinance of the church mortgage.
- Continue to assist with any building renovation or upgrades necessary as the church transitions to a hybrid life together (in-person and digital) and whatever facility changes are necessary to attend to participants and grow membership.

## Deacon's Report 2020

### Deacon Lynn Bulock

People 65 and older make up a large portion of our congregation. During a normal time my work includes making hospital, rehab, assisted living and home visits as needed. Now, instead, I spend a huge amount of my time online, on Zoom meetings, and on the phone touching base with folks who need help, encouragement, prayer or just a quick visit.

Zoom is also the way I attend congregational council meetings, Tuesday morning Bible study, and Worship and Music Committee meetings. I preach at least every 5-6 weeks, write prayers for worship, and sing in the Praise Team when needed.

### Highlights of Senior Ministry this year

- Keeping the list for Home Touch going as it expands and contracts. Home Touch is a subscription service New Hope uses with an inspirational message and a page of “brain training” puzzles and games. It is sent to seniors and shut-ins. New Hope adds two pages to the newsletter every week, one a message from Pastor Craig, or myself, or ministry events, or community announcements. The second page is a list of prayers from the congregation from worship and prayer chain; almost everyone on the Home Touch list either does not use email or uses it infrequently. In our current life together while apart, there's at least one week a month when two pages of prayers replace the letter and one page of prayers.
- We've added an email version of Home Touch for folks who are mostly younger seniors, want the information, but are happy to get it via email as a cost savings to the church. So far there are five households on the email Home Touch list, and that number is growing.
- Communications and organization play a large part in what I do right now. I've helped write surveys, put together home communion distribution, and kept up a phone chain. It's a strange new world, but I feel oddly at home in it with a background in communications and relational work.

## Pastor's Report 2020

Rev. Craig R. Beeker

### Welcome to the 2020 Annual Meeting of the Congregation

We celebrate the life of our congregation at our congregational meeting even as we miss seeing each other in the flesh.

It is an understatement to say things have changed in 2020. We all know they have changed in countless ways. I do not feel the need to count them again.

What we have seen is much learning and growing of the staff and the members of our congregation. Within the last six months staff and members have:

- adapted to Zoom meetings and have grown the number of participants
- produced weekly videos of our worship services with increased viewership
- utilized the phone tree and prayer chain in expanded ways
- learned to use and integrated new tools like Slack and Drop Box
- developed and launched a new church website
- added new ways of communicating, such as utilizing MailChimp for weekly emails
- surveyed the congregation
- upgraded and installed new lighting in the sanctuary
- delivered Vacation Bible School in a box to homes
- expanded the list of those involved in our Home Touch mailing (for seniors/shut-ins)

*Adapted. Grown. Produced. Utilized. Learned. Integrated. Developed. Launched. Added. Surveyed. Upgraded. Installed. Delivered. Expanded.* These are words of progress. These are words used in association with success.

It has been difficult in 2020 to feel like there is much success in the world. Success is not a term used during pandemic, unrest, protest, and political division. But I would say New Hope has seen success because of the hard work of its staff and members.

It is impossible to count **worship attendance** – a typical marker of vitality. I am grateful to the many who tune in to our weekly worship. Since our first “online” worship service was posted to YouTube on March 21, 2020, we have had 3700 views. How many of these views were New Hope households? How many were views by people that are “*online visitors*” to New Hope? We cannot accurately count.

We can count the numbers of **people in classes and the number of classes** – both have increased. We have begun to see participation from members who have moved away, and new folks who have joined the conversation.

We can count the **financial vitality** of the congregation – which is solid.

We can count the **commitment of outside groups** like the 12-Step support groups who utilize the church facility. When we were required to close our building to the public in late March, we communicated with the groups to let them know we would be reserving their space for them for when we could open again. We also advised them they would not be required to make their monthly donations while the building was closed. However, many of these groups have chosen to continue giving their donations, saying, “***New Hope has been there for them, now it is their turn to be there for New Hope.***”

Counting our successes does not mean the journey has been easy. 2020 has been difficult for all of us of every segment of our congregation. Again, I do not need to recount the many ways it has been difficult.

We have been worried about **how to connect** with the congregation. We have tried new things (home delivery of Holy Communion, Zoom) and doubled down on old patterns (prayer chain, phone tree), too. As a staff member, it never feels good enough and at the end of each day there is a long list of folks with whom to yet connect and a long list of things that yet need to be done. This is typically how ministry feels...so that is the one constant.

**Grieving** as a congregation has changed during 2020. Thank you to those who have attempted to provide solace and hope to the grieving by making a call, sending a card, or giving a video tribute. This year we grieve the loss of beloved friends: Marian Pasko, Ron David, Arnold Reuter, Steve Blair, Don Pryor (and two additional funerals beyond the congregation for the Averitt and Collet families). These are significant changes to their families and to our life together.

Apart from the longing to reconnect in community in-person, to share goodies and coffee, to laugh unfettered and free from masks and social anxiety...such wishful bliss! Apart from that longing we have learned what it is like to be a church without any building, just like the earliest church.

**Whatever we have done with our faith has been in our homes and not in a church building.** Luther believed that the home was the center of Christian spiritual formation and the church was a supplement. The last six months have demonstrated this principal. What have you done with your faith? We all have mirrored the experience of the primitive church, the ones where faith in Jesus changed the world, like the Apostles, like Lydia in Philippi, like Mary and Martha and Lazarus in Bethany. Not one of those New Testament folks had a building to enter called a “church” – instead, they were part of a movement, a lifestyle, a revolution formed around the values and way of life of Jesus.

At this congregational meeting, the council will propose combining youth and education into a new initiative: **Faith Formation**. We have been talking about it a long time and we are now going to re-shape the council. We have too long associated growing the faith as something for the young to do in **Amplify and Confirmation**, *and we will continue to have those things*, but we imagine a world in which people’s lives flourish as they increasingly become like Jesus. This, to me, is the single purpose of the church.

I want to **thank our staff**, Laurie, Deacon Lynn, Aleta, David, Pastor Scott, and Gail, who have worked under difficult conditions in jobs that are the same and yet completely different. Each of them deserves our thanks and praise! Our worship team has spent countless hours making online worship possible. Terry has taken the lion share of responsibility for producing the videos by recording, editing and publishing them. *(We want to show more of our member's faces in our worship videos. Please let me know if you are willing to record for us!)* Brian has moved us to new technology and greater quality; Chris has given us outstanding sound; Mary Ann puts the music together in preparation for recording days; Deacon Lynn and our Musicians, Aleta and David – wow! Joe, our jack of all trades, has done so many things during the last year and we could not have functioned without him!

For everyone who has placed a phone call, sent a card, delivered home communion, made a meal, attended a class or zoom meeting, contributed food or effort or money – you've made a difference and we are ever grateful to you. We are better together even when we are separated during a pandemic. You have proven this. I invite you to engage with us even more. It has been difficult and imperfect but we are making our way through this time, learning, growing, and trying to love and honor each other and God.

We will eventually move to in-person everything again but, we will also be keeping some of the things we have learned about being a connected community. I expect we will continue to seek ways to connect with members who cannot be in person. I would like to grow this to include our college age students and members who have recently moved away. For near or far, in person or virtually, at home or at college, we can all be blessed by New Hope and be active members – we are all learning to flourish as we increasingly become like Jesus.

I hope you will invest in this mission.

In Christ, our living hope!

Pastor Craig Beeker

September 20, 2020

## Your Church Council – 2020

### Council Members

- **Development**  
Chuck Titcomb
- **Education**  
Currently open
- **Evangelism & Outreach**  
Mary Gallagher
- **Fellowship**  
Leila Mader
- **Finance & Endowment**  
Joseph Bulock
- **Lay Ministry**  
Jim Merrill
- **Music and Worship**  
Sandy Hansen
- **Operations/Facility**  
Gary McGinnis
- **Social Ministry**  
Merylee Blair
- **Staff Ministry**  
Alison Rowe
- **Stewardship**  
Tom LaVanne
- **Youth Ministry**  
Brian Gibbons
- **Pastor**  
Craig Beeker

### Council Leadership Executive Committee

- **President**  
Brian Gibbons
- **Vice President**  
Alison Rowe
- **Treasurer**  
Joseph Bulock
- **Secretary**  
Tom LaVanne

### Church Staff

- **Pastor**  
Rev. Craig R. Beeker
- **Director, Senior Ministries**  
Deacon Lynn Bulock
- **Youth Pastor**  
Rev. Scott Fielder
- **Choir Director**  
Aleta Braxton
- **Pianist**  
David Cohen
- **Parish Administrator**  
Laurie Scott

*All members of the church may attend Council meetings. All meetings are open.  
We meet via ZOOM the 2nd Tuesday of each month beginning at 6 p.m.*