



newhope *news*

Lutheran Church - Agoura Hills

November, 2020

Giving Thanks Even in 2020

The Apostle Paul knew hardship and imprisonment. He suffered for the gospel he was proclaiming. Yet in the midst of it all, St. Paul knew that true freedom was found in Christ. So, he said, "Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 NIV). From one end of the Bible to the other, we are commanded to be thankful. In fact, thankfulness is the natural outflowing of a heart that is attuned to God. The psalmist declared, "Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving" (Psalm 147:7, NIV). Paul wrote, "Be thankful" (Colossians 3:15, NIV). A spirit of thanksgiving is always the mark of a joyous Christian. Ingratitude is seen as apart from God's will (in other words, a sin).

I know it is 2020 and we are having a hard time being grateful, but we have plenty of reason to give thanks... even in 2020! Why should we be thankful?

Thank God for the Material Blessings

We never seem to be satisfied with what we have - rich or poor, healthy or sick. But what a difference it makes when we realize that everything we have has been given to us by God! Old King David prayed, "Wealth and honor come from you ... We give you thanks, and praise your glorious name ... Everything comes from you" (1 Chronicles 29:12-14, NIV).

Wealth and poverty are not two sides of the gratitude spectrum. I have known miserable wealthy people who have an insatiable appetite and are never content. On the other hand, I've known people of very humble means who are radiant with joy. The difference is usually gratitude.

St. Paul declared, "I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want" (Philippians 4:12, NIV). A spirit of thankfulness makes all the difference.

Are you constantly preoccupied with what you do not have? Or have you learned to thank God for what you do have? Give thanks...it will do you good.

Thank God for the People in Your Life

It is so easy to take people for granted, or even to complain and become angry because they do not always meet our expectations. But we need to give thanks for those around us - our spouses, our children, our relatives, our friends, and others who help us in some way. We've all come through an elongated period of isolation - many have a renewed sense of the profound gift the presence of other people provides. Thank God for those who touch your life.

On November 1st we celebrate the Sunday of All Saints and, as is our tradition, held a remembrance for those who have died in the previous year. We rang a bell and spoke the names of over 40 people. We lifted up in prayer (love, honor, and grief) six New Hope Lutheran Church members in that group: Donald Pryor; Steve Blair; Ronald David; Arnold Reuter; Marian Pasko; and Denny Koons. Remember these dear friends and reach out to their loved ones to extend your love and care.

I'm also very thankful for you, dear New Hope family. We've had a hard year, each one. However, you have been faithful in your giving and good works. We are ahead on the 2020 budget and you will see posted in the newsletter the excellent financial commitments (in pledges) for 2021! I thank God for you!

Thank God in the Midst of Trials and Even Persecution

We draw back from difficulties, yet not one of us is exempt from trouble. During those trials we can thank God, because we know that God has promised to be with us and that God will help us. We know that God can use times of suffering to draw us spiritually closer: "My brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of any kind, consider it nothing but joy, because you know that the testing of your faith produces endurance; and let endurance have its full effect, so that you may be mature and complete, lacking in nothing." (James 1:2-3, NRSV).

I do not know what trials you may be facing right now, but God does, and God loves you and is with you by the Holy Spirit. Cultivate a spirit of thankfulness even amid trials and heartaches and see if your burden or how you carry it changes.

Thank God for His Continued Presence and Power in Your Life

When we come to Christ, it is not the end but the beginning of a whole new life! He is with us, and wants to help us follow God's Word and emulate the life of Jesus. In ourselves we do not have the strength that we need to live the way God wants us to live. But when we turn to God, we discover that "it is God who works in [us] to will and to act according to his good purpose" (Philippians 2: 13).

In our country a special day is set aside each year for thanksgiving. It will be a different kind of Thanksgiving this year. But for the Christian every day can be a day of thanksgiving, as we are "always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:20, NIV). Gratitude makes a huge difference in our life. May I ask you to work on this gratitude project this month? Can you think of one thing each day of November for which you are grateful? Keep the list and, some time during Thanksgiving, read it aloud again to yourself or to those gathered to celebrate! I think you and everyone gathered will be blessed by your outpouring of gratitude, even or especially in 2020!

Join us for worship online and join us for our next parking lot Holy Communion (most likely November 22... watch for details). I also want to invite you to the Interfaith Thanksgiving service online this year as well (we will make it available through our website). It will most certainly be a blessing to gather religious communities as one in a collaboration of gratitude!

We are a blessed people by a good God! Praise to Jesus, the King of kings!

Gratefully,

Pastor Craig



From the Deacon

If you're reading this, it's November. We've "fallen back" from daylight savings time, and it's dark at 5:30. If you've waited a few days to read your newsletter, we probably know the results of many elections. And just around the corner are Thanksgiving and the first Sunday in Advent.

Thank you for everyone who helped with or participated in our first drive-through Holy Communion in October. It was great to see so many of you. We look forward to the day that we'll be able to commune together inside the building, but that's going to be a while, since the church is in L.A. County, not Ventura County, where that is happening on a very limited basis in some churches.

We're planning for another communion on the parking lot this month, on November 22nd. That's the Sunday before Thanksgiving, and the last Sunday of the church year. We're hoping to have everyone who can sign up that way do so on the website or via email so we know how many people to expect.

We're also hoping to use the drive-through to give folks the home Advent supplies they want to participate in the season. We're looking at an Advent devotional, probably from A Sanctified Art like we had last year, and an Advent calendar, and possibly a four-candle (battery candle) set to make a home Advent wreath with. There will be a way on our signup to let the church know which parts of that you want, so that there can be a bag with your name on it on drive-through Sunday for you to pick up. Look for information coming on the website, on Facebook, and by email soon.



From the Youth Director, Pastor Scott

Psalm 1

- ¹ Blessed is the one
 who does not walk in step with the wicked
or stand in the way that sinners take
 or sit in the company of mockers,
² but whose delight is in the law of the Lord,
 and who meditates on his law day and night.
³ That person is like a tree planted by streams of water,
 which yields its fruit in season
and whose leaf does not wither—
 whatever they do prospers.
⁴ Not so the wicked!
 They are like chaff
 that the wind blows away.
⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment,
 nor sinners in the assembly of the righteous.
⁶ For the Lord watches over the way of the righteous,
 but the way of the wicked leads to destruction.

In scripture there are many references to both us, God, and Jesus as plants. Jesus talks about being the true vine and we are the branches. In Psalm 1 the writer talks about the person who delights in the law of the lord being like a tree that is planted near the water. This kind of tree flourishes and produces fruit and whose leaves do not wither. This also brings to light another theme that scripture often touches on and that is our foundation. About how ones house is built on either sand or rock. Where we begin, where we are rooted is clearly very important to the writers of the different books of the Bible.

But just as the writers of scripture like to talk about our foundation, our beginnings, our current society loves a good story about someone who is overcoming the odds, rags to riches as it's known. When we see these stories portrayed in books and movies, it comes off as an inspiration, someone who has nothing works so hard and finally all that work pays off and they now have a much better life because of it. On the surface this sounds like a great story and something to be inspired by, and to a certain extent I agree. But this also begs the question, why did that person have to start there? Why did they have so many obstacles to overcome in the first place?

When we look at the situations that some people are put in and really think about the phrase, against all odds, that should be troubling. Why are people in these dire situations needing what sounds like a miracle to make it out of said situation. One would think that there would be systems in place to help people either never get to this sort of scenario or at least give them a helping hand when they hit rock bottom. If you are someone who likes gardening and I said that I was only going to give some of my plants water, some of them just sunshine and the others everything they need to succeed that would sound crazy to you right? Why would any of those plants need to go without something that I clearly can provide for them?

Yet in the current world that we live in, there are so many people who find themselves without a home, without clean water to drink and sometimes with no food to eat. Yet in 2010 the U.S. wasted 133 billion, that's billion with a B, pounds of food were wasted and I would assume that this number has not changed by much even after a decade. That is enough food to feed every single person on the planet with ease. Yet we continue to let children go to school hungry making it much more difficult for them to concentrate and potentially do well in school, which could effect their chances at getting the education they deserve and would therefore effect many aspects of their adult life. All because the foundation for that child was a poor one that could be avoided.

We should be making sure that those around us resemble a tree that is planted by a flowing stream, that they have the opportunity to prosper in the ways that God has called them. If you are someone who was given a good foundation and opportunities that were granted by privilege, I hope that you reflect on that and have some gratitude for that, but then I hope you work to make sure that everyone has a chance to bear good fruit and have a solid foundation.

Amen.





Caring Corner

Let us remember the following people in our prayers.....

Sue Poulson is recovering from melanoma surgery.

Sue Koons on the death of Denny.

Continued prayers of healing for Barbara Artinian, Katie Jo Ash, Floyd Bealer, Merylee Blair, Irene Bright, Elisabeth Brown, Evelyn Colby, Sandy and Matt Cowden, Faith David, Holly Dolliver, Jill and Chris Fisher, Steve Frye, Lyla Grant, Bob Green, Sandy Hansen, Del Hultgren, Joyce Lawson, Reeta Leland, Joan Looman, Elisabeth and Jorgen Makitalo, Cheryl Merrill, Ava Grace O'Connell, Nick and Cindy O'Hare, Ahoo Pilehvari, Sharon Pryor, Wayne Rickert, Jane Taschereau, Rose Topliss, Jax Rains-Turk, Fred Turner, and Britt Tsumpes.

Prayers for our servicemen - Landen Anderson, Gerren Blair, Taylor Blair, Heather Brown, Keith Brown, Patrick Clohessy, Cynthia Colby, Jonah Hershman, Kyle McCarley, Ikenna Olelewe, and Jason Retter.



My son and I would like to express our heartfelt appreciation for the words of comfort which helped us through this difficult time. We are so blessed to be a member of such a giving and caring congregation God's blessings to each of you.

Sue and Steve Koons



Do you need a facial covering?

Kathy Rogers will make you a custom mask. For \$5 the money will be donated to Lutheran Social Services and to NHLC. Just email her at Kathleen.rgrs@gmail.com or call her at 818-889-4058. Above are 2 samples - pleated or more fitted. She can now make masks for Fall and Christmas.



SCRIP gift cards are easy to give and fun to receive plus a percentage of every gift card purchased through New Hope comes back to New Hope! Purchasing SCIPT is once again available by contacting Kathy Rogers at kathleen.rgrs@gmail.com or 818-889-4058. Kathy will be happy to let you know when and how the cards will be delivered to you. She can also make a list of participating vendors upon request.

From the Treasurer



Thank you for your continued generosity in 2020! Your giving through September amounted to \$315,660, about 8% over budget. This does not include the PPP loan/grant amount. Our expenditures so far this year are about 5% below budget; although year-end funding of a long term repair fund is anticipated.

Giving statements for the first 9 months were distributed last month. Contact Joe Bulock if you have any questions about the donations or pledge amounts identified.

E-Giving – Contact Gaye Khan or Joe Bulock if you would like information about the various automated giving options available with the church.

New Hope Mission Endowment Fund

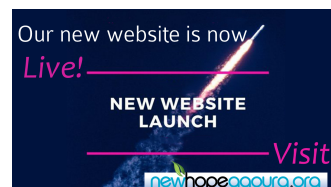
The Committee has designated \$5,000 for grants to be disbursed in 2020-2021, and will be accepting grant applications this fall to support religious, charitable or educational projects. Please direct your favorite charities by submitting a form found on the new website.

Thrivent Choice®

If you have an investment or policy with Thrivent, you may be able to direct Thrivent Choice Dollars® to the causes and nonprofits you care about, such as New Hope. Go online or contact your representative to direct these monies.

Pledge Update

Thanks to all who have provided pledges for next year. 61 pledges have been made totaling \$316,930. That is about \$10,000 over last year. This is quite an accomplishment for these interesting times. If anyone would still like to make a pledge, please contact Joe Bulock.





MANNA FOOD PANTRY

Manna will gladly accept ANY unexpired (within 12 months prior to the "sell-by" date), non-perishable food items that are unopened and in good condition. Donations can be taken directly to Manna. Any questions, call Ann Ashamalla at (818) 613-6818.

Top Priority Items

- 1 - Peanut Butter
- 2 - Pancake Mix
- 3 - Red/Kidney Beans
- 4 - Hamburger Helper
- 5 - Ramen Noodles
- 6 - Tomato Soup - Canned and Boxed
- 7 - Tomato Paste/Sauce
- 8 - Canned Vegetables
- 9 - Canned Fruit
- 10 - Flavored Rice (Rice-a-Roni)



New Hope in a Mug!

While we are spending more time at home, we can all use some daily encouragement. New Hope mugs are designed with a positive, uplifting faith-based message to enjoy in your home. If you would like to reserve a mug for yourself or anyone that can use "New Hope," email laurie@newhopeagoura.com. (Mugs are \$5 each.)



The daytime Book Club will meet at 11:45 AM on Zoom on Tuesday, November 3rd to discuss "The Secrets of Mary Bowser" by Lois Leveen. Please join us if you can. The future books we are reading are....

December 1st - "The Lager Queen of Minnesota" by J. Ryan Stradal

February 2nd - "Caste" by Isabel Wilkerson

Prime Timers



Here we are celebrating cooler weather and wearing warmer clothing. Let's all remember each other on Tuesday, November 10th at noon and hold up a cup of good cheer: apple cider, coffee, tea, or hot cocoa and salute each other for another month. Be sure to keep up your spirits looking forward to that magical day when we can all run outdoors and shout "Fresh Air, Hallelujah." Keep safe and healthy and until next month, enjoy the autumn weather. Call or email me any time.

Rose Topliss (818-439-3830) or rosieroro@gmail.com



Join Our Heavenly Hiking Fools

For over a few months, we have been doing a morning hike every Tuesday and Saturday from 7:00 – 8:30 AM. We are calling ourselves the

Heavenly Hiking Fools, and we are a fun, uncompetitive group of Christian hikers. Because the Conejo Valley is blessed with a number of amazing hikes with beautiful views, we go on a variety of hikes. Whether experienced or new, all are working to get in shape and maybe lose a little weight. We take rest stops to give new hikers a chance to catch up and get in shape. We hike for 45 minutes and then go back the way we came so people can get on with their day. If you would like to join us when your schedule allows, send an email to Terry Paulson (terry@terrypaulson.com). You'll receive a regular email update on our next hike and how to get to that trailhead. We may not be able to worship together, but we can hike together and maintain physical distance.



Support Our Military

Please continue to collect personal care items and treats to support our troops. Travel size products such as soaps, shampoo, razors, lotions, deodorants, etc. are especially appreciated. Hard candies, lifesavers, and breath mints make refreshing treats to share too. Contact the church office at 818-889-8700 or by email to laurie@newhopeagoura.com to make arrangements for drop off.



CHRISTMAS GREENERY

It's that time of year to order your greenery. PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE talk to your neighbors, friends and co-workers and encourage them to send direct delivery gifts. Everyone has a special person who is difficult to shop for and they will love receiving a fresh green wreath or other decoration that fill their home with the aroma of Christmas. The direct delivery gifts are a great idea for companies to send to their clients. It's a special way to say "Thanks." Be sure and make this unique opportunity known to all who like to have beautiful fragrant and REAL Christmas greenery surround them at the holidays. And don't forget to order greenery for your own home too! The greenery will arrive shortly after Thanksgiving. Being that this year is different with the pandemic and not sure if you will be able to be celebrating with friends and family, an easy gift to send them would be greenery. You don't even have to go to the store to get it. Being that we aren't together on Sundays for worship, I can't show you the flyer in person or give you an order form. If you want to order greenery, please email Gail McGinnis (gsmcginnis@roadrunner.com) or call me at 805-523-7884 and I will be happy to take your order. If your order will be going to the same people you sent to in the past, I have all your info on the computer so make it easy on yourself. Give me a call and I will work with you. You can send your checks directly to the church, just be sure to mark it for "greenery." The prices and pictures of greenery are below. There is no charge for delivery, but we now have to pay sales tax and that will be added on to the price of your greenery order. All orders are due to me no later than November 10th.



HOLIDAY GREENERY

22" Mixed Evergreen Gift Wreath - \$36

2 - 10' Western Cedar Gift Garland - \$43

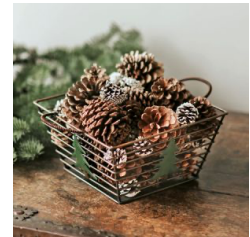
Gift Centerpiece with LED Candle - \$33

Noble Fir Gift Door Swag - \$40

28" Mixed Evergreen Gift Wreath - \$41

Cone Gift Basket - \$30

Evergreen Gift Set - \$65



3 ways to give to support the work of New Hope



Online donations can be
made through our Website
using the PayPal option



Contact the church office for
assistance in setting up
automatic giving



Address to:

New Hope Lutheran Church
29295 Agoura Road
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

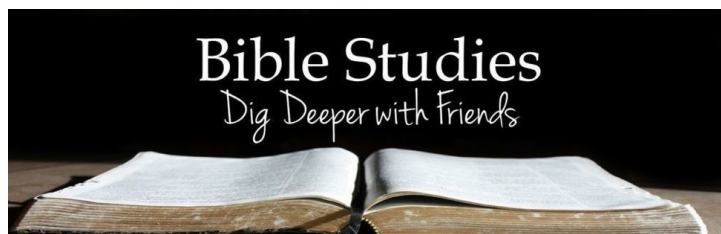
Visit our website

1 THESSALONIANS 5:25

PRAYER WALL

SUBMIT A PRAYER REQUEST • PRAY FOR SOMEONE ELSE

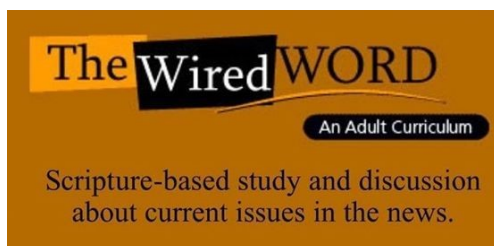
*Praying together
keeps us together*



Are the continuing COVID-19 restrictions causing you to feel disconnected from your church family? Even though we can't be together in all the ways we have been accustomed, we can connect by taking advantage of technology! We would like to encourage you to check out our weekly Bible Studies held on **ZOOM**. ZOOM provides a "real-time" meeting environment where you can interact with all participants. If you would like help getting started, reach out to the church office at newhope@newhopeagoura.com or call us at 818.889.8700 and we will assist you. Don't miss this option to stay connected with your church family while deepening your relationship with Jesus.

Details for all our classes, including convenient links that will connect you to the ZOOM meetings, can be viewed on our website at: www.newhopeagoura.org/upcoming-events

Adult Study & Discussion—ONLINE



Sunday Mornings at 9a.m. or Sunday Evenings at 7p.m.

Join us each Sunday on ZOOM when we delve into a current event taken from the "Wired Word." If you would like to receive a preview of our weekly discussion, email Pastor Craig at craig@newhopeagoura.com to be added to the mailing list.

Women's Bible Study—ONLINE Mondays at 10 a.m.



Women of all ages are invited to attend our weekly bible study when we spend time in God's word, in prayer and in fellowship. It is a great opportunity during this time of COVID-19 restrictions, to draw closer to God and to be supported by one another.

Tuesday Morning Bible Study—ONLINE at 10a.m.



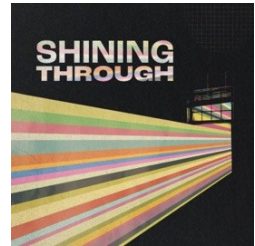
This bible study is hosted by Pastor Craig. We are currently using the study from *Gather Magazine* from the Women of the ELCA. If you would like to receive the study material each week, email Pastor Craig at Craig@newhopeagoura.com

Men's Bible Study & Fellowship—ONLINE Thursdays at 7:30a.m.

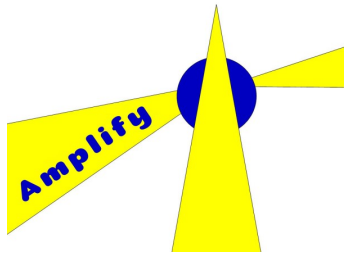


The Men of New Hope gather each week for stimulating conversations about current issues involving life and faith. They are currently in a study entitled "Shining Through" featuring Rev. Andy Stanley from North Point Community Church near Atlanta, Georgia.

Join us. All Are Welcome



Programs for our Youth



Amplify is a Sunday School program designed for children ages 4 years through 4th grade. Join us each Sunday morning on ZOOM at 9:30a.m.

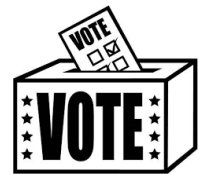
Contact Merylee for **ZOOM** access information



Confirmation continues to meet as a middle school youth group with activities planned each week on ZOOM including: art projects, cookie baking, games, prayer, and good conversation.

Contact Pastor Scott or Pastor Craig for **ZOOM** access information

2020 Election Ballot



There are many important issues on the Ballot this November, and it is our job as Christians to be active members in our society. We provide as one among others to guide your thinking on propositions. These come as some perspectives from our wider church and faith. If you are interested, the Lutheran Office of Public Policy has published a voter guide for the California propositions which can be found at lutheranpublicpolicyca.org/2020-voter-guide.



November Birthdays

- 1 Ann Church
- 8 Kara Nelson
- 9 Ann Ashamalla
- 15 Laura Davis
Amra Chudleigh-Neal
- 16 Alec Fisher
- 17 Mariella Edgar
- 20 Elham Kamali
Cheryl Merrill
- 26 Gary McGinnis
- 29 Debbie Niebolt



**DON'T FORGET TO SET
YOUR CLOCKS BACK ON
SATURDAY, OCTOBER
31ST. YOU WILL GAIN AN
EXTRA HOUR OF SLEEP!**



*The deadline for all
articles for the December
newsletter is November 25th.
Be sure to email them to
gsmcginnis@roadrunner.com.*

Disaster Preparedness

As we enter into the fire season, now more than ever is a good time to review the Disaster Preparedness resources that have been compiled by your Church Council and posted to our website. <http://www.newhopeagoura.org/disaster-plan/>

**DO NOT FOLLOW
WHERE THE PATH MAY
LEAD. GO INSTEAD
WHERE THERE IS NO
PATH AND LEAVE A
TRAIL.
- Muriel Strode**

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