



newhope news

Lutheran Church - Agoura Hills

February, 2020

Upside Down and Unexpected



Being upside down in the world isn't anything new for the Christian. The Christian church often finds itself at odds with culture. You may feel this way as a Christian in our culture today. We are in good company with well-known saint central to the month of February. This month we celebrate Valentine's Day.

Valentine was a Roman Christian (or maybe a variety of Roman Christians) who were committed to the way and values of Christ. In one legend Valentine refused to worship the public leader, the emperor. In another legend, Valentine broke the law of the empire by marrying Christian couples to spare the husbands from being sent to war. These acts of matrimony and political resistance and civil disobedience by Valentine were illegal and, according to government officials, punishable by beheading. Valentine is a martyr.

Not a very sentimental message, I know. I don't mean to diminish your Valentine's Day with such a serious story. However, the reality behind the real Valentine challenges the sentimental meaning at the heart of how our society celebrates his commemoration. Valentine is upside down to his culture and ours. St. Valentine invites us to look deeper at real love. Real love isn't self-serving. Real love usually has a cost because it seeks what is in the best interest of the other. To seek the best interest of the other often means we must set aside our own desire for their betterment. It shouldn't need to be said, but it does need clarifying in our fallen world of exploitation and co-dependency: such love does not mean that in personal relationships only one person gets what they want. For love to work, each needs to seek the betterment of the other. Ephesians will say, "out of reverence for Christ there ought to be mutual servanthood." In society, Christians continue to live with loving action toward others and realize that there are times when such love and service moves in only one direction, like the grace Christ offers us on the cross).

Sunday we read Paul who wrote, "I know nothing but Christ and him crucified." In the world of religious beliefs and politics of the first century and the 21st this a perplexing statement. We read this along with the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5. Following Christ brings a unique set of values that are often upside down from the culture. From the crucified we draw values like (among others):

Forgiveness
Dignity & Inclusion

Reconciliation
Courage

Compassion
Care for the oppressed

Justice
Non-violence

With Valentine's Day just around the corner, we find ourselves looking for ways to show others that we love them. But how do we show God that we love God?

Jesus asked Peter three times "Do you love me?" Three times Peter responded, "Yes Lord, you know I love you." To each of his responses Jesus replied, "Feed my sheep." Jesus was showing Peter that an outpour of our love for Jesus is by caring for his children.

In Matthew 20: 28 Jesus said of himself that "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life for many." One of the simplest expressions of Love in Scripture is sharing with others. One of the most valuable things we can share is ourselves: our talents and energies in serving others.

Take an opportunity today to serve.

Do something truly unexpected (especially in our culture at this time) and extend unconditional, not expecting something in return, grace. Take the initiative and do more than what is expected. Be a person who keeps their word. Be a person who has disciplined speech and action so that love is heard and seen. Be a good spouse who seeks to out-serve their beloved. Return kindness for impatience. You know, the random act of kindness person. Protect the innocent and defend the cause of the needy. Take a risk for love's sake. Christ wants to know: Won't you be a Valentine?

In the Love of Jesus,
Pastor Craig



ASH WEDNESDAY
First Day of Lent



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE

Wednesday, February 26th

7:30 PM at

New Hope Lutheran Church



LENTEN LUNCHEON TUESDAYS

Join us on Tuesdays throughout the season of Lent for our Lenten program. We will meet in the Social Hall at 11:45 AM for a delicious soup and salad luncheon, followed by a time of worship and guided reflection. This will begin on March 3rd.



From the Deacon

One of the things that Senior Ministry does that almost no one else knows about is the Home Touch letter. This is a four-page letter (two sheets) that goes out to some of our senior members who are 90 and over, or homebound, or have moved away from the Conejo Valley and want to stay in touch with New Hope.

Two pages we get from a subscription service called Home Touch that gives us a new devotions page and a new puzzle page every week. It costs less than a dollar a week for as many copies as we choose to make for this part, and the folks who get the letter each week like it. For the past three years we've added a personalized two-page letter as well. There's a rotating spot that Pastor Craig and I write, and once a month folks get the community announcements that are part of that week's Sunday worship bulletin. The fourth week is news from our youth group, or a focus on a ministry of the church. The second page from New Hope is a list of prayers from the Sunday service, and from our prayer chain. Many of the people who get Home Touch don't do email, and that's the way our prayer chain goes out to those who pray.

One of the most expensive parts of Home Touch isn't the subscription, or my time and the time of someone in the office who puts all of this together, or the supplies and copying; it's the postage. It costs 55 cents each week for each letter that goes out. Currently one person's postage for a year is almost \$30. One of the easiest ways to help fund Home Touch would be to drop off a packet of 100 stamps at the office. We go through almost 100 a month, so they're greatly appreciated.

Another way to help with Senior Ministry would be to plan to call and visit someone on the Home Touch list who's still in the Conejo Valley but isn't able to make it to church any more. I'm always happy to share a name with someone who's willing to commit to regular contact with someone who might be lonely.





Caring Corner

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

Sandy Hansen has been in the hospital having tests done.

Evelyn Colby is recovering from having pneumonia.

Gary McGinnis is recovering from surgery.

Continued prayers of healing for Tom Appleton, Barbara Artinian, Floyd Bealer, Steve Blair, Elisabeth Brown, Chris Chigaridas, Sandy Cowden, Holly Dolliver, Jill and Chris Fisher, Steve Frye, Lyla Grant, Bob Green, Sandy Hansen, Del Hultgren, Denny Koons, Joyce Lawson, Reeta Leland, Ava Grace McConnell, Cheryl Merrill, Nick and Cindy O'Hare, Janel Perez, Ahoo Pilehvari, Sharon Pryor, Arnold Reuter, Wayne Rickert, Jane Taschereau, Rose Topliss, Britt Tsumpes, Jax Rains-Turk, Susie Turner, and Pastor John Wilker.

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.



We rejoice with Bonnie and John Bell and Irene Bright on the birth of their granddaughter/great-granddaughter, Goldie Ann. She was born on January 24th and weighed 10 lbs. 2 oz. and was 22" long. Proud parents are Robbie and Brittany and brothers, Chip and Johnny.

Prayer Partners



How can we pray for you and with you? Prayer partners are standing

in the back of the sanctuary during Holy Communion. If you desire individual prayer, please see a prayer partner after you have communed and are going back to your seat.



Church Directory Update

Please make the following change to your church directory.

Chris Chigaridas

chchigaridas@gmail.com



I wish to truly thank all of the following people for helping to take down our church Christmas decorations. With your help, it was a quick and smooth operation!

Much appreciation goes out to: Gary Alwood, Gail and Calvin Beeker, Kristine Beeker, Joe Bullock, Kevin Barry, Laura Davis, Mariella Edgar, Mary Ann and Lou Fiore, Brian and Luke Gibbons, Pat Henkel, Karen Ingram, Sue Koons, Natalie Larkin, Bud and Toni Larson, Leila Mader, Robin Martin, Gail and Gary McGinnis, Jim and Cheryl Merrill, Jerry Orefice, Terry Paulson and Sue Poulson.

I apologize if I missed anyone. With all the bustling around on that day, it is hard to keep track of everyone helping. Each and every person is an integral and important part of our yearly set up and take down. See you all next year!

With Appreciation,
Karen Orefice



Hey Tech Heads!

You know who you are! The mere thought of ticking the keyboard on a MAC, PC, Tablet, Cell Phone or Sound Board gets your heart racing. Or if you've ever sat in the service and said, "I could do that!", then don't delay, apply today. We are seeking additional tech heads to join our dedicated team to create a seamless, effortless slide and music experience for our worship. Is it YOU? Are YOU ready? Then let Laurie Scott know that you want to be added to the list for an upcoming training session where you will learn the ins/outs and little known secrets of the tech side of our house. The training session will be scheduled within a month or two. Don't miss out! Tech has become an integral part of our worship experience and your passion for tech excellence, skills and innate talent can help us take it to the next level.



Altar Guild Guru

Are you naturally endowed with a spirit of hospitality as well as a spirit to serve others? Would you enjoy being trained to lead the Altar Guild by our very own Karen Ingram? Do you enjoy coordinating the gathering of many hands to make light the work? If so, notify Laurie Scott, Pastor Craig or Jax Rains-Turk, and let us know that you would like to be considered for this service-enhancing, faith-enriching, and spirit-renewing service to our congregation.



New Hope Mission Endowment Fund

The New Hope Lutheran Church Mission Endowment Fund has been established to provide a perpetual source of income to support mission work at home and around the world, above and beyond the programs supported the church budget. Council approved the Committee's recommendation to fund grants to the California Lutheran University Counseling Center, El Camino Pines Camp, and Community Conscience. If you have any questions about how to contribute, ask any member of the committee (Gail Beeker, Joe Bulock, Moeed Khan, Andrew Mansmann, or Wayne Rickert).



From the Treasurer

Thank you for your outstanding generosity in 2019! Your giving amounted to \$428,071 and our expenditures were \$417,873. There was no fund transfer needed, and Council added over \$10,000 to the carryover fund to aid in finances for the next two years. The 2020 Budget, as approved by Council, was approved by the congregation at the congregational meeting on January 26th. Key items included the establishment of a long-term repair budget and a reduced mortgage payment due to the scheduled 10 year reset. Contact Joe Bulock if you have any questions.



Christmas Eve Services

So, believe it or not; February is here; Lent is around the corner; Easter will be here before we know it, All Saint's Day, and then heavenly hosts will be on the scene again for Christmas. So, we are planning now for our Christmas Services. Worship and Music is focused on creating a meaningful, memorable holiday experience for our church family and guests. As such, our reaching out to all members of the congregation to query you about our Christmas Eve celebrations.

So, we want to know how you'd like Christmas Eve Services to be timed. Currently, we offer 3 services at 5:30, 7:30 and 11 PM. in order to better meet you, your family and your friends/guests needs, we need to know the following:

1) Would you like for us to consider going from 3 to 2 services?

Yes ____

No ____

2) If yes - please tell us why? If no, continue on to Question 3 or 4.

3) If not, why not?

4) If you voted yes - Why?

5) If you voted yes, pick the service schedule you'd like to see:

5:30 and 10:00 ____

5:30 and 11:00 ____

7:30 and 10:00 ____

7:30 and 11:00 ____

Please use the slips in your bulletins

and let your voice be heard by placing them in the offering plates or basket in the back of the sanctuary!

Year-end statements

Year-end giving statements are available now in the narthex. Please stop by and pick yours up today.



Congregational Meeting

Thank you to all who attended last Sunday's congregational meeting. The 2020 budget approved earlier by your Church Council was ratified. Additionally, the 2020 Council was installed including new Council members: Jim Merrill - Lay Ministry, Mary Gallagher - Evangelism Outreach, and Chuck Titcomb - Development.

"Choose to be optimistic - it feels better."

- Kristen Bell

"I love when the house is hushed and reverent, and on the days I'm fortunate enough to catch the first glow of orange on the eastern horizon, I smile. I believe God grins back."

- Guideposts





The Daytime Book Club will meet at 1:00 PM in the church library on Tuesday, March 3rd - to discuss "The Honey Bus" by Meredith May. Please join us if you can. The future books we are reading are....

April 7th - "Secret Daughter" by June Cross

May 5th - "Becoming" by Michelle Obama

BIBLE STUDY

Join us in the Social Hall from 9:30-11:30 AM on Tuesday mornings. Study starts at 9:45. We are currently using the study from Gather Magazine from the Women of the ELCA.



Monday Night Bible Study

Open to all women of all ages. We meet in the New Hope library from 7-8:30 PM for prayer, study and fellowship.



Prime Timer's Luncheon

Prime Timer's will meet on Tuesday, February 11th at 11:30 AM in the social hall. If you are over 50, you are more than welcome to attend. Come join us for lunch but be sure to let Rose Topliss know if you are able to come so we will have enough food for all. Our speakers will be Jerry and Joan Olsen, grandson of Nils

and Ellen Olsen, one of the original settlers in Thousand Oaks. They will talk about family life in the early days of T.O., bringing memorabilia and some hand tools they used in the late 1890's to show.



The New Hope Lutheran Men's Fellowship

Join us on Thursday mornings for Men's group from 7:30-8:30 AM. We are continuing in our stimulating DVD series featuring Rev. Andy Stanley from North Point Community Church near Atlanta, Georgia. His programs are fun, thought-provoking, and Biblically based. Come and help stimulate some great conversations about current issues involving life and faith. Come when you can to enjoy the coffee, donuts, and fellowship with some great men of faith.



Sunday Morning Adult Study

Join us at 9 AM in classroom 2 each week before our worship service 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.



Church Nursery

This is just a reminder that there is a church nursery for infants through 3 years old during the

worship service. If there isn't a person in the nursery, please ask an usher and they will let the volunteer know you need someone to watch over your child while you are in worship. We are happy to watch your child and look forward to spending time with them.



Amplify

Amplify is a Sunday School program designed for children ages 4 years through 4th grade. Following the "Children's Welcome" time, the students will be released to their Amplify teacher who will lead them to Classroom #3. They will return near the conclusion of the service to take part in communion and in singing the closing hymn with their families.



Middle School Confirmation

Join us each Wednesday at 5:30 PM in the library. We conclude at 8 PM.

"It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful."

- David Stindl-Rust

"Either we have our dreams or we live our dreams."

- Zoe Koplowitz

"The sun shines not on us but in us."

- John Muir



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. Please leave any donations in the box the narthex. Any questions, call Ann Ashamallah 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)



Conejo Valley Meals Program

Conejo Valley Meals Program serves the needs of the homeless and disadvantaged in our community by providing food and shelter. This effort is coordinated with the churches of the Ecumenical Council of Thousand Oaks, Westlake Village and Agoura Hills. Our church hosts a dinner once each month.

New Hope will be hosting the next meal at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Thousand Oaks on Monday, February 17th. A sign-up sheet for desserts and salads is in the narthex and donation

envelopes are available if you would like to contribute monetarily. The food needs to be at the church by 6 PM. If you have any questions, please contact Merylee Blair at 805-490-1867.



Support Our Military

A campaign is underway to honor and support our troops. Those on the front lines keeping us safe are often low on the basic necessities and treats. Please help us fill the collection box located in the narthex with travel size products such as soaps, shampoo, razors, lotions, deodorants, etc. Items like lifesavers, breath mints and hard candies make refreshing treats you can share too.



SCRIP gift cards are easy to give and fun to receive but did you know that a percentage of every SCRIP gift card purchased through New Hope comes back to New Hope? It's a WIN/WIN! Stop by the SCRIP table today and choose from our current inventory. You can also pick up a list of the hundreds of gift cards that can be special purchased through New Hope for Christmas giving. See Kathy Rogers for more information.



Zelle Give Better With Mobil Banking

For those who use mobile banking, New Hope has enabled e-giving via Zelle.

It's fast (via your phone banking app); safe (using our church email) and has no fees charged to our church. Note: It will default to general giving unless you designate Youth Fundraiser or Scrip gift

cards in the note field. Be sure to confirm the email address is set to: laurie@newhopeagoura.com before sending money. Contact Joe Bullock or Kathy Rogers if you have any questions.

Did you Know?

Your Church Council has been busy compiling valuable resources for our community. Visit the **RESOURCES** tab at **NEWHOPEAGOURA.COM** and you will find an extensive collection of information on **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS** that can assist you and your family in becoming prepared for the next event. Many of these resources are now available at our communications bulletin board in the hallway.

Giving By Text discontinued

New Hope began using Vanco's GIVING BY TEXT as an alternative donation option in August of 2018. Since then its use by our visitors and members has been minimal. With consideration for the additional costs associated with this program, the Church Council has voted to discontinue offering the GIVING BY TEXT option at this time. Donations and SCRIP gift card purchases can still be made with mobile giving apps such as Zelle. Thank you for your willingness to try new things!

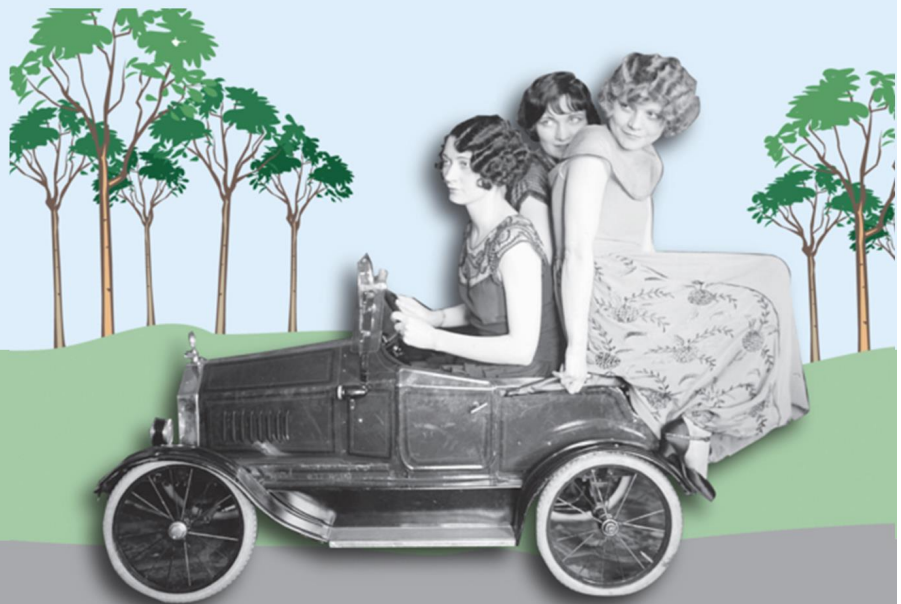
"Every day holds the possibility of a miracle."

- Elizabeth Davis



*Prayer Shawl meets the first Sunday of each month
in the Amplify Room at 9:15 AM.*

Give a lift...
be a
blessing!



Drivers are needed to assist our seniors who need a ride to Tuesday Bible Study and Sunday Worship. Pickup locations are in Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village.

Please see Marsha Chew for details.



Run/Walk With Us!

Join team: **NEW HOPE FOR LINDA**

<https://events.lustgarten.org/team/273362>

Westlake Village City Hall

Sunday, February 23, 2020

check in begins at 7a.m.

CROP Walk – Sunday, March 1st at Cal Lutheran University

Walkers, workers and money are needed for the CROP Walk planned for Sunday, March 1st on the campus of Cal Lutheran. Registration and check in starts at 12 noon, and the walk starts at 1 PM. Your choices are a short walk, a longer walk, a short campus stroll or assisting with registration or water stations (we need to know about this choice in advance).

CROP Walks take place each year (for the last 50 years) around the country to address hunger and poverty locally and around the world. For example, farmers in Vietnam learn to build low cost water purification systems to access clean water. Two shelters in Belgrade, Serbia allows children to do homework, eat a meal, take a shower, and get a change of clothes. Farmers in the Dominican Republic improve their harvests and plant vegetable gardens. They also raise pigs, fish, and other animals to improve their diet and earn extra income.

Locally, the Conejo Valley CROP Walk provides supplemental funding to Meals on Wheels (both Westlake Village and Thousand Oaks), MANNA, the Conejo Valley Winter Shelter, the Conejo Valley Meals Program, and the Harvest Food Pantry.

Please use the following web site to register to walk or to make a donation:

<https://www.crophungerwalk.org/thousandoaksca>



You can search for New Hope or Fred Dunn to join our team. Thank you for your support to this community activity.



23 Natalie Larkin
25 Amanda Cowden



Please help keep our utility costs down by turning off the lights when leaving a room or hallway and by making sure all lights are out if you are the last to leave the building. Thank you!

February Birthdays

- 5 Uche Olelewe
Kate Powledge
Calvin Beeker
- 7 Roger Niebolt
- 8 Carol Mansmann
- 9 Andrew Mansmann
Allison Mars
- 14 Elizabeth Sauger
- 15 Irene Bright
- 18 Jameson Blair
Kyle and Logan
Ashamallah
- 19 Levitt Blair



Join the choir and sing your praises to God. We meet on Thursday evenings from 7-9 PM in the sanctuary for rehearsals. We hope you will join the choir and bring some joyful music to Sunday worship! All are welcome!



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

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