



# newhope news

***Lutheran Church - Agoura Hills***

**May, 2020**

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## **Where do we go from here?**

That's the question everyone wants to know and is addressed in daily briefings across the country. When can we get back to normal? The answers range from reactionary opening of public venues, to well-thought-out plans for a gradual reopening. California leadership has laid out a four stage process with benchmarks in a "Road to Re-opening". In person church services are in stage three (as a whole, we are currently at stage one).

When can we return to use of the church building? Given the timelines, we will be using online worship and zoom meetings/studies throughout the entirety of May.

Even when governmental restrictions end, I anticipate the church leadership will extend those guidelines a few weeks before we are open to congregational use of the building, and perhaps a couple more weeks beyond that for general usage.

Certainly it will be an uneven kind of reopening: as restrictions conclude the precautionary behaviors will continue. Physical distancing, refraining from personal touch and face masks will most likely continue until vaccines and treatments are well established. For the most medically vulnerable, strict adherence to safe practices may continue for an indefinite period. We will need to expect and give permission for a longer, staggered, and cautious return to church life for some members. I expect NHLHC to open more slowly than the rest of society because our issue is the wellbeing of our members and not one of economics (BTW: we had a solid, positive income in April! Thank you for your generosity!).

One thing I know for sure: our plans will not go as expected. We will need to listen and adjust our plan accordingly. The only thing for sure is change will come.

On Good Shepherd Sunday, May 3rd, I reflected on Jesus' leadership. Among other things, I said the posture and work of Christian leaders is to listen and to teach others to listen to Jesus, the Good Shepherd. Jesus lifts up a model of leadership that is *for* others (service oriented) but also *beneath* them (accompanying them).

It is easier to be a Christian *leader* in the public sphere than a Christian *servant* in my own household. I like being *influential* a lot more than I like being *responsible*. Few want to be *accountable*, but most people want to be in *control*. Because Jesus' leadership style is so counter to our culture, the best Christian leaders can do is listen to the Good Shepherd and teach others to do so, also.

When times are fluid and filled with change – we need to listen again to the Shepherd who guides our way. One of eight dimensions of following Jesus includes experiencing God. You intentionally and consistently engage with God in such a way that you open yourself to a deeper understanding of and deeper relationship with God.

How?

- Increasing your awareness of God's love and presence
- Growing in the knowledge and grace of God
- Reflecting on and applying scripture in your everyday life
- Dialoguing authentically with God
- Worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

Here are a few resources to help you listen to the Good Shepherd:

Resources for Spiritual Wellness in Anxious Times by the Upper Room

<https://www.upperroom.org/covid-19>

The Daily Examen by Fr. James Martin (ancient prayer focusing on seeing God in our day):

<https://examen.libsyn.com/>

Daily Bible Reading:

<https://www.elca.org/Faith/DailyBible>

Scripture memorization (Verse of the day):

<https://www.biblegateway.com/>

Weekly Lectionary Bible Study:

<https://www.elca.org/Resources/Bible-Studies>

Praying for Others (Intercession):

<https://www.elca.org/Resources/Prayer-Ventures>



Contemplative Prayer

Learning Contemplative Prayer:

<https://cac.org/about-cac/contemplation/>

Lectio Divina – what is it?:

<https://bustedhalo.com/ministry-resources/lectio-divina-beginners-guide>

Lectio Divina video:

<https://lectiodivinatodd.com/>

I hope you will spend time getting your heart attuned to the voice of the Good Shepherd as we wait in this time.

We are planning a second opportunity for Home Communion on the Sunday of Pentecost, May 31, 2020. We need help assembling and distributing again. Please let me know if you can assist with this significant and worthwhile effort.

We remember the women in the congregation on Mother's Day, May 10th. If you have a mom, send her some love and appreciation. If you have a significant person who enhances life for you or who you trust and admire – reach out to her with affirmation and love.

Stay staff – stay in touch with each other – live in Easter hope – walk with God.

Blessings, Pastor Craig

## From the President's Corner

The Worship Team of Terry Paulson, Brian Gibbons, Pastor Craig, Deacon Lynn, Aleta Braxton, and David Cohen are all thrilled to have been working hard on producing an inspiring video for Sunday services. Please comment below on the video on the home page. Look for the Comment Form. See this screenshot.

May God Bless You and Your Family,  
Brian Gibbons  
Council President of New Hope Lutheran



[Download this Sundays bulletin here](#)

Comment on this video please, it is anonymous

Your Message



## **From the Deacon**

This has been an Easter season like no other one I've experienced. It's taken a lot of flexibility, and creativity to get through this one in a way that still celebrates our risen Lord.

One of the things that actually got me into the celebration was putting together our wreath from the cloth "unbind and let it go" strips we put together during Lent. By the end of Holy Week, we had over fifty strips of cloth on the wreath form, with burdens written on them. Those all needed to be woven into the wreath form, have all the loose edges tucked away, then wrapped with ribbon to look like a crown of celebration instead of a crown of thorns. It took a few hours to do, but what resulted was a beautiful thing, bright colored and wrapped with rainbow and gold ribbon. It will still be in the sanctuary or narthex for you to see when we eventually get to gather together again.

What are the gifts you won't soon take for granted? For me, it will be hugs, and Holy Communion. It will be group singing, and not worrying about whether I have done enough laundry to have a clean mask when I go out of the house. I'd love to hear your additions to this list.

Blessings,

Deacon Lynn



## **From Pastor Scott**

A few Sundays ago we heard about the story of the road to Emmaus. The travelers are thinking about what has happened over the past few days with Jesus' death and now resurrection. And as they are walking Jesus comes alongside them and they do not recognize him. For me this is a classic case of not being able to be present in the moment. I am someone who struggles with this. The idea of taking time to be still and silent to do something like prayer or meditation sounds more like a challenge than a spiritual practice. In times like these it can be even more difficult. We are all wondering when things will get back to normal, when we will go back to work, when we will be able to eat out at a restaurant, when we can worship together again. I understand why we are doing this, but by doing this we are missing what is happening in this present moment. Like the travelers on the road to Emmaus, we might miss something that is standing right in front of us. There are things that we will learn from this interesting time in history and we must take it all in so that we can do better when this is all over. When we are present during difficult moments those are almost always times where, when we look back on that situation, we see that God walked alongside us and cared for us.





## Caring Corner

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

Continued prayers of healing for Tom Appleton, Barbara Artinian, Floyd Bealer, Steve Blair, Irene Bright, 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 O'Connell, 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.



*Dear brothers and sisters of New Hope,*

*I want to thank you for your generous donation. I feel that God always sends his angels over us and you are God's instruments. We are going to be able to benefit some families that are having a lot of difficulties in these times of crisis. God bless you and take care. Thank you for having a great heart and really living the gospel of Jesus; "They said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?"*

*Pastor Adriana Johnson-Rivas  
Prince of Peace Lutheran Church*



## New Hope in a Mug!

How do you start your day? Does it involve coffee, tea, hot chocolate, hot water with lemon, or almond milk with turmeric? No matter what you put in your mug, why not start your day with a positive, uplifting, faith-based message?

We have what you need. New Hope mugs are not just for visitors. Upgrade your mug collection or gift a friend or family member who needs some inspiration. For a \$5 donation, you can have your very own mug!

If you'd like to reserve a mug or two or three or four, call Laurie in the office and she'll be happy to set aside your "Hope in a Mug."



## From the Treasurer

Thank you for your generosity already in 2020! Your giving in March amounted to \$18,818, down about \$10,000, due to the CoVid-19. However, our year to date giving amounted to \$132,402, which is about 8% over budgeted giving. Our expenditures in March were \$32,619. Thanks to those who were able to increase their giving in April to help us through this time. We have applied for the second wave of federal PPP funding but have not yet heard that we have received a grant. Please contact Joe Bullock if you have any questions.



## Giving Options

These are clearly extraordinary times. For all those who are currently donating to church using any of the available e-giving options, thank you! Your continued giving is supporting the church in a difficult time. We are in the process of installing a PayPal link on the New Hope webpage to facilitate payment by credit cards. Until then, if you normally donate during Sunday services, please consider making your donations via mail for the next few weeks.

## 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.

## Dining with a purpose

The Scrip donation program that we used to have with Vons (not the gift cards) still provides 2.5% to NHLC from various restaurants in the area and nationwide. Just register at [escrip.rewardsnetwork.com](https://escrip.rewardsnetwork.com) to get involved.



## 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 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)



## Social Ministry

Hello Church Family!

My prayers are that everyone is staying safe! Our overnight shelters and Meals Program are cancelled to protect everyone's health due to Covid-19. Harbor House, LSS and Manna are on the front lines to secure and feed many now in unconventional ways. The fallout from the epidemic with things like job loss or furlough will put an unprecedented strain on our Social Ministry partners. I will be asking our

congregation to step up as we always do to safely offer our assistance. Weekly I will notify everyone of the current needs. We each can do much in a safe and healthy way. Please look for the email blast from me sent by Laurie about the requests from these agencies. Thanks to those who have already started answering that call. We are a New Hope in Christ.

Blessings, Merylee Blair



## 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 when we return back to our church building 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 giving. See Kathy Rogers for more information.



## Zelle Give Better With Mobil Banking

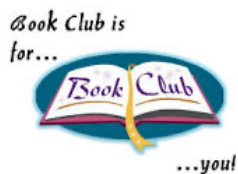
For those who use mobile banking, New Hope has enabled e-giving via Zelle.

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](mailto: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.





The Daytime Book Club will meet at 11:45 AM on Zoom on Tuesday, May 5th to discuss "The Things We Cannot Say" by Kelly Rimmer. Please join us if you can. The future books we are reading are....

June 2nd - "Becoming" by Michelle Obama

July 7th - "Sold on a Monday" by Kristina McMorris



Join us on Zoom on Tuesday mornings from 10:00 - 11:45 AM. We are currently using the study from Gather Magazine from the Women of the ELCA.



### Monday Bible Study

Open to all women of all ages. We meet on Zoom at 11:00 AM on Mondays for prayer study and fellowship.



Join us on Thursday mornings for Men's group from 7:30-9 AM on Zoom. 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 fellowship with some great men of faith.

## Adult Sunday School

Join us at 9 AM each Sunday morning 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](mailto:craig@newhopeagoura.com) to be added to the mailing list.



### Amplify

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



### Middle School Confirmation

Join us each Wednesday at 5:30 PM on Zoom.



### Graduates

We would like to recognize our 2020 high school and college graduates in next month's newsletter. Please send the graduate's name, where they are graduating from and their future plans by the next newsletter deadline, which is May 25th. The information can be emailed to [gsmcginnis@roadrunner.com](mailto:gsmcginnis@roadrunner.com) or call Gail at 805-523-7884.



### A Mother's Prayer For You

I said a Mother's Day  
prayer for you  
to thank the Lord above  
for blessing me with a lifetime  
of your tenderhearted love.  
I thanked God for the caring  
you've shown me through  
the years,  
for the closeness  
we've enjoyed  
in time of laughter and of tears.  
And so, I thank you  
from the heart  
for all you've done for me  
and I bless the Lord  
for giving me  
the best mother there  
could be!

~ Anon.



### May Birthdays

- 3 Darian Kamali
- 5 Elaina Church
- Rachael Harrell
- Delilah Harrell
- 10 Elisabeth Brown
- 11 Evelyn Brown
- 13 Steve Chew
- 15 Brian Gibbons
- 19 Rose Topliss
- 23 Kevin Wilkinson
- 25 Marian Pasko
- 26 Linda Leland



*"Knowing something  
doesn't change your life.  
Doing something does."*

*"Being positive won't  
guarantee you'll  
succeed. But being  
negative will guarantee  
you won't."*

- Guideposts

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

*"I believe people are  
in our lives for a  
reason. We're here  
to learn from each  
other."*

- Gillian Anderson



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New Hope Lutheran Church  
29295 Agoura Road  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301  
818-889-8700  
[www.newhopeagoura.com](http://www.newhopeagoura.com)

