



HAPPY NEW YEAR  
2023!



# newhope news

***Lutheran Church - Agoura Hills***

January, 2023

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*"I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it? I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert." - Isaiah 43:19*

The Holy Spirit is constantly flowing among us, presenting us with new opportunities and exciting challenges. The story of the Bible is a story of change: from the Israelites wandering the desert, to the birth of Jesus, to the ministry of Paul. God is always working and moving in new ways in the world.

As 2022 comes to a close, and we think about the year ahead, it is a good time for us to ask questions. What will happen in the future? Where might God be guiding us? How can we grow?

My life will certainly change a lot over the next few months. I began my call here at New Hope at the beginning of December. I have been truly grateful for your warm welcome and hospitality. The past month has been a wonderful whirlwind. I have been focusing on pastoral care, getting to know the congregation, and guiding worship through the Christmas season. As we step into 2023, I am truly looking forward to getting to know you all better.

More than anything, I feel excited for the year ahead. I pray that you all share in that sentiment with me! God is always working in the world, and God is working here at New Hope. The church has been through a tremendous amount of change over the past year: saying goodbye to Pastor Craig, sorting through the call process, and bringing in a new pastor. It is hard work. But God has guided the congregation, and God will continue to guide us through the future.

I invite you to approach 2023 with a sense of joy. Change is a hard thing, but Christ works through change. The Spirit is here!

Let's work together to share God's mission in the world. Trust in God's love and share that love with everyone you meet.

Peace,  
Pastor Steve Simpson



## FROM DEACON LYNN

If Advent is waiting, and Christmas rejoicing, then Epiphany is enlightenment. We say we have “an epiphany” when we suddenly understand something. The ancient church had three great festivals: Christmas, Epiphany, and Easter. The day of Epiphany, marking the wise men worshipping the baby Jesus, is celebrated on January 6. Epiphany as a season of the church starts then, and goes for six Sundays starting with the Baptism of Jesus (January 8 this year) and going through February 12.

Even though our nativity scenes these days have the angels and shepherds and wise men all in the same place at the same time, it’s possible that there could have been up to two years between Mary and Joseph’s arrival in Bethlehem and the adoration of the Magi (or wise men.)

Now, if we really want to get confusing, we can talk about the difference between the Julian Calendar (as in Julius Caesar) and the Gregorian Calendar, started in 1582 by Pope Gregory. The Romans had miscalculated the length of a solar year, and the “new” calendar caught us up by taking eleven days out of what counted as a year. We complain about daylight saving time, and leap year; imagine readjusting a calendar to “lose” eleven days! That’s when the western world started celebrating Christmas on December 25<sup>th</sup> and marking a “twelve days of Christmas” starting then and going through Epiphany.

At our house we try to keep those twelve days looking and sounding at least a little bit like Christmas. There are still carols playing, and while the tree might come down some years on January 1, the nativity scene(s) wait until January 6, when the wise men have made their journey across the room to where the stable is.

What’s one thing about your faith that you’d like to understand better, or be enlightened about? Maybe this year we can work together to do that in this quiet time between December 25 and January 6.

Blessings,

Deacon Lynn





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

Sandy Cowden fell and broke her left wrist and left patella.

The Ash Family on the death of Scott's dad, Lynn.

The Chew Family on the passing of Steve's mom, Ruth.

Continued prayers of healing for Barbara Artinian, Floyd Bealer, Tom Beddingfield, Evelyn Colby, Steve Frye, Lyla Grant, Kara Henkel, Joyce Lawson, Jorgen Makitalo, Cheryl Merrill, Kathryn Murray, Debbie Niebolt, Ava Grace O'Connell, Cindy O'Hare, Karen Orefice, Ahoo Pilehvari, Sharon Pryor, Wayne Rickert, Nina Rose Sawaya, Madelyn and Stan Swope, Jane Taschereau, and Rose Topliss.

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



### Memorial Service for Sandy Hansen

On Saturday, January 21st at 11 AM, there will be a memorial service for Sandy Hansen. It will be held in New Hope's sanctuary with a light lunch to follow in the social hall.



### Undecorate the Church

We had a wonderful and dedicated group come out to decorate the church this year! Thank you very much to: Lynn and Joe Bulock, Sandy Cowden, Mary Ann and Lou Fiore, Sue Koons, Gail and Gary McGinnis, Jerry Orefice, Pastor Steve, Lorie and Terry Paulson, Sue Poulson, Jeff Rausch, Kathy Rogers and Laurie Scott. We really appreciate your help and hope we have as lovely a group for the take down on Saturday, January 7 at 11:00.

Happy New Year!  
Karen Orefice



### Bowls of Hope Painting Party

Bowls of Hope (BOH) is a Many Mansions fundraiser for the programs they have for their residents. Attendees at the event receive a ceramic bowl that has been painted by someone in the community. The Social Justice small group is hosting a bowl painting party on Wednesday, January 11<sup>th</sup>, from 1 - 3 PM in the fellowship hall. Many Mansions staff will tell us about their programs while we paint a ceramic bowl to be given away at the Bowls of Hope. Cost is \$30 per bowl painted (covers materials and firing), with checks payable to Many Mansions. Space is limited but there are a few

seats left. If you would like to paint a bowl, please contact Karen Ingram (805-390-9298) to reserve your spot.



### Make Their Spirits Bright

The Social Justice small group thanks you for your donations of blankets, beds, toys, collars, leashes, and food for the Agoura Hills Animal Care Center and Healthcare for Homeless Animals. Your donations brought smiles to the staff and volunteers of both organizations and will be used to make life better for animals waiting for their fur'ever homes.



### Healthcare for Homeless Animals

On December 17th, we learned that this wonderful agency pays the medical bills for sick and injured animals brought to the Agoura Hills Animal Care Center. Founded in 1996, Healthcare for Homeless Animals has funded medical care for over 110 animals to date in 2022. The average cost to treat a dog is \$500 and a cat is \$850. All senior animals receive a health screening prior to being listed for adoption. Donations to support their work may be sent to: Healthcare for Homeless Animals, P.O. Box 7401, Thousand Oaks, CA 91359-7401. Donations are 100% tax deductible. More information can be found at [www.healthcareforhomelessanimals.org](http://www.healthcareforhomelessanimals.org).

THANK YOU!

## Social Ministry

Happy New Year All! I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your huge support for our Social Ministry Programs last year! The generosity of New Hope's congregation is truly amazing. This past year we have included meals and lunches for longtime partners Lutheran Social Services and Harbor House. We once again participated in Adopt a Family with 60 gift cards going to Harbor House. The children of Prince of Peace Houston were blessed to receive 70 Target gift cards to create a special Christmas for children in need at our sister church. We joined with new Partners in the Women's Interfaith Network to donate 2 car loads of much needed household products for Afghan refugees. They came with the clothes on their backs to escape persecution in Afghanistan. In another joint WIN project, we donated a carload of school supplies which went to fill 160 backpacks for at risk students at Thousand Oaks High School. Our Good Gifts Christmas Program is almost over and I will be reporting to you soon. Laundrylove is beginning to take off with families coming to wash clothes at an increasing regularity and so very grateful.

I am deeply humbled and feel incredibly blessed to experience your generosity financially and in giving your time. I pray for a blessed and loving New Year to all. Each of us are truly the hands and feet of Jesus!

Blessings, Merylee Blair



## Prayer Shawl Ministry

A prayer shawl is a knitted or crocheted shawl that can comfort and support those in need. While stitching, the maker of the shawl prays for the recipient. Prayer shawls can be made to convey blessings for a wedding, birth, Baptism, or comfort during an illness or loss. If you would like to request a prayer shawl for someone, or would like information on how you can participate in this ministry, you can use this URL for the "click here" link: <https://www.newhopeagoura.org/ministries/prayer-shawl-ministry/> and it will take you to the Prayer Shawl Request form.

Our next prayer shawl meeting is on **Sunday, February 5th at 9:15 AM** in the Amplify Room.



## Giving Options

There are many different ways one can donate to New Hope. In addition to the weekly or monthly offerings of cash/check or electronic giving through Vanco or PayPal, one can also

- donate directly from an IRA to help with a required minimal distribution (RMD)
- donate stocks or funds directly to the church (save on capital gains taxes)
- designate New Hope to receive a gift from a Charitable Fund

Please contact your accountant, financial advisor, or Joe Bullock if you have any questions.

## MANNA FOOD PANTRY

With rising prices at the gas pump and in the grocery store, Manna Conejo Valley Food Bank is seeing an uptick in client visits and new clients. In the Conejo Valley, it may appear that there is so much food available, but there are about 15,000 people in our area in need of food.

Please consider cleaning out your pantry and donating some items to this wonderful organization serving our local community. You may drop off your donations in the wood chest in the hallway, outside of the sanctuary.

Any questions, call Ann Ashamalla at (818) 613-6818.

### Top Priority Items:

1. Cold Cereal
2. Peanut Butter
3. Canned Tuna/Meat
4. Spaghetti or Pasta Sauce
5. Canned Pasta (ravioli, spaghetti-o's)
6. Canned Chili
7. Canned Chicken Noodle Soup
8. Drinks - (juice, milk, almond, oat)
9. Flavored Rice
10. Shampoo/Conditioner/Soup



WAYS  
to   
GIVE

Thank you for  
supporting the work  
of   
Lutheran Church



In Person

An offering plate is available at all in-person worship services.



By Mail

Address to:  
New Hope Church  
29295 Agoura Road  
Agoura Hills, CA  
91301



Online

Secure Giving through our website using the PayPal donate option  
[NewHopeAgoura.org](http://NewHopeAgoura.org)



Volunteer

Sharing Your Time & Talents  
If interested in serving, contact the church office for more information



## January Birthdays

- 5 Avery Mansmann
- 6 Alyssa Taylor
- 10 Pat Henkel
- 15 Tom LaVanne
- 23 Karen Ingram
- 24 Robin Martin



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! You can let Kathy Rogers know what you would like to order by emailing her at [kathleen.rgrs@gmail.com](mailto:kathleen.rgrs@gmail.com) You can also request a list of the hundreds of gift cards that can be special purchased through New Hope for giving. She will send to you the list via email for you to see what could be ordered.

Contact Kathy Rogers for more information - [kathleen.rgrs@gmail.com](mailto:kathleen.rgrs@gmail.com)

*The deadline for all articles for the February newsletter is January 26th. Be sure to email them to [gsmcginnis@roadrunner.com](mailto:gsmcginnis@roadrunner.com).*



The daytime Book Club will meet at 11:30 AM in person and/or on Zoom on Tuesday, February 7th - "Can't Wait to Get to Heaven" by Fannie Flagg . Please join us if you can. The future books we are reading are....

**March 7th** - "The Four Winds" by Kristin Hannah

**April 4th** - "The Maid" by Katie Prose

"It's one of the simplest sentences in the world, just four words, but they're the four hugest words in the world when they're put together: You can do it."

- Sherman Alexie

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

