



newhope news

Lutheran Church - Agoura Hills

July, 2023

“For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken. On God rests my deliverance and my honor; my mighty rock, my refuge is in God. Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.” (Psalm 62:5-8)

Does it ever feel like life has become harder since the pandemic? It has been a difficult couple of years, and we are all a little bit worn out. If you have ever felt that way, this psalm is for you.

Life can be challenging. We get sick and stressed out. We fight, and we argue. We hurt each other and hold grudges. These things can shake us to our core. The psalm above compares God to a fortress, but we might find ourselves feeling more like sandcastles. As the tide rises up, the next wave might very well be the one to wash away our crumbling walls.

But this psalm also speaks a promise: God is there. The Lord is our foundation of solid rock. Sometimes the presence of God towers like a fortress, and we can see it clearly. Other times it may be harder to see. This is why the author of the psalm “waits in silence.” The voice of the Lord sometimes seems not much louder than a whisper. But it is there. God’s promise to you is that you are always loved.

God is with you through the good and the bad. Even when the water begins to rise, the Lord remains as your foundation. Your feet are on solid ground, and nothing is stronger than the bedrock of Christ’s love. When you feel yourself battered by life’s waves, remember that God is your refuge.

This psalm is for you.

Peace,

Pastor Steve Simpson



From the Deacon



The sign outside says “All Are Welcome.” I know we’re pretty sure we mean that, and I suspect that we do, as far as it’s possible. But voices in the ELCA and other church bodies have started to point out that “All Are Welcome” can be a meaningless phrase. If all are welcome, this can mean we “welcome” everybody whether they are happy to welcome everyone that walks in the doors alongside them. Too often we’re willing to welcome those who are already like us in race, gender, opinions, etc.

In an article in *Sojourners* by Lutheran pastor Angela Denker, she gets to the heart of the problem: “Many times churches actually do have in mind a particular subset of people with whom they’d like repopulate their congregation. Many times this particular subset looks an awful lot like the current membership of the church, albeit 20-30 years ago. Often, though, neighborhoods and needs have changed. And a vital ministry — perhaps to immigrant workers, to retired folks, to single adults — is forgotten in light of chasing the ever-elusive ‘young families.’ ”

New Hope is a welcoming community. Folks who come for the first time are usually very vocal about the welcome they receive, and I love to watch that happening. But maybe we should focus more on what Christ calls us to do in the way of welcome: “In Christ’s family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ. Also, since you are Christ’s family, then you are Abraham’s famous “descendant,” heirs according to the covenant promises.” Galatians 3:28-29 *The Message*.

This is hard work. And it starts with changing ourselves, changing our hearts. Then maybe later we can talk about the sign out front.

Blessings,

Deacon Lynn



CHOSEN & free

SAVE THE DATE!
May 17 – July 5
6-7:30 p.m.

Meet us in the
New Hope Sanctuary
Wednesday evenings, for
a viewing of
THE CHOSEN
followed by a discussion



The Chosen is the first-ever multi-season TV show about the life of Jesus. The Chosen allows us to see Him through the eyes of those who knew Him.

Save the date to join in this 8-week event, Chosen & Free. Each Wednesday, we will begin with a brief time of meditative prayer, and then watch an episode from Season 1 of THE CHOSEN. Following the viewing with a time shared in a small group discussion regarding the episode. Light refreshments will be served.

Sign-ups are not necessary and visitors are welcome so bring a friend!

Come & See!





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

Evelyn Colby fell but is recovering at home.

Continued prayers of healing for Sandy Cowden, Lou Fiore, Steve Frye, Lyla Grant, Kara Henkel, Chuck and Vi Kemmerer, Joyce Lawson, Cheryl Merrill, Debbie Niebolt, Ava Grace O'Connell, Cindy O'Hare, Ahoo Pilehvari, Sharon Pryor, Phyllis and Wayne Rickert, Suzanne Sahlie, Madelyn and Stan Swope, Jane Taschereau, and Fred Turner.

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.

Scrip

Fundraising while you shop!



Our Scrip Gift Card Fundraising program has a fresh start for 2023. Kathy Rogers, our Scrip Coordinator, has begun taking special orders for gift cards. The cards will be delivered to you at church, the following Sunday. You can pay for the cards by check, cash, or electronically through your bank using Zelle (*New Hope Account* is: laurie@newhopeagoura.com) Please see Kathy for more information.



We are looking for a volunteer to serve as the liaison between the support groups and the church.

This person will process the monthly contributions from the groups, coordinate the meeting schedules, inform groups when church activities are happening, etc. The tasks will take 3-5 hours per month. Some computer skills are necessary. If interested, please see Laurie. Thank you!



MEN'S GROUP

Men's Bible Study and Fellowship

Thursdays at 8:30 AM - New Time

Our men's group uses Rev. Andy Stanley's sermons to focus our discussion. We frequently stop the video to discuss our reactions and applications to our faith journey. We are always marveling at how helpful they are in developing spiritual growth. Recent series included such compelling topics as: *Your Integrity: Our World, Not in It to Win It, and Heaven: Who Goes There?* Join us when you can. Attend in person in the church library or join us on Zoom.



Prayer Shawl Ministry

Come by the Amplify Room (behind the kitchen) to our next gathering on Sunday, July 2nd at 9:15 AM and see what we're about. We knit, crochet, or loom shawls for those who may be in need of comfort of support or to recognize a celebration or a blessing.



Laundry Love

Thanks to everyone who provided spare change and other donations to the Laundry Love program over the past year. Laundry Love is a national program that partners diverse groups and laundromats so low/no income families and person(s) can wash their clothes and bedding. They brighten the lives of thousands of people through love, dignity, and detergent. We recently provided about \$300 in quarters to Burnis Reed, New Hope's representative for the local Laundry Love program. We look forward to your continued support of this practical program.



THE PIECE MAKERS HAVE BEEN BUSY

Seven ladies have been making lovely quilts for Lutheran World Relief. We have 10 finished now and we just started in April. We have everything we need from donated fabrics, thread and sewing machines. But, we do need to purchase the batting that goes into each quilt. We will gladly take donations to purchase the batting.

If writing a check, or donating electronically by Zelle®, please indicate that you are donating to Piece Makers.



Quilt of Valor

Please plan to attend church service on Sunday, July 2nd as it will be a special day for Lou Fiore. It will also be a surprise to him.

The Piecemaker Quilt Ladies have made a beautiful Quilt of Valor for our wonderful Lou who is a Veteran of the Marines. We want to honor him with a Quilt of Valor for his service in the Marines. The quilt has been made with love and heartfelt thanks for all he has given to our country.



Safety Ministry Status

The New Hope Safety Ministry was established to bring both safety and security awareness to New Hope. During our first meeting, areas of focus were identified such as medical, fire, earthquake, unwanted intruder and parking lot risks, and the members are in the process of risk assessment within each area.

To avoid unwanted intruders during worship, it is strongly recommended by safety experts that the outside doors of all houses of worship be locked from the inside shortly after the service has started. We are also in the process of obtaining the same type of locking mechanism for the two unlocked doors into the sanctuary; however, these will not be locked during the service. We have a lot of valuable equipment which needs to be more secure when not in use. To continue to offer a sanctuary for private prayer during the week, we will be creating a prayerful space in what is now the nursery.

We are working with community groups to identify and make available medical emergency training such as AED and CPR. There will be more on this important component of the Safety Ministry later.



Piece Makers

Quilt Project for Lutheran World Relief

This quilting group meets in the Amplify classroom, every other Thursday, from 9a.m to 1p.m. Our goal is to contribute quilts for distribution through Lutheran World Relief.

Please contact Kathy Rogers if you would like to join us, or for more information.

Kathy can be reached by email:

kathleen.rgrs@gmail.com

Our next meeting is July 6th at 9a.m.



Please place any of these "top priority items of the month" in our Manna Box in the hallway:

1. Personal Care Items: shampoos, conditioner, soap, toothbrush & paste
2. Diapers— all sizes
3. Paper Products: toilet paper, paper towels, tissue
4. Shelf-stable Drinks: juices, oat, almond, soda



July Birthdays

- 1 Gary Alwood
- 3 Wayne Rickert
- 4 John Leland
- 8 Bonnie Northcott
- 13 Chriss Alwood
- Jane Taschereau
- 15 Dorr Looman
- 21 Hannah Hershman
- Karen Reed
- 24 Merylee Blair



The daytime Book Club will meet at 11:30 AM on Zoom on Tuesday, **July 11th** to discuss "The Book Woman's Daughter" by Kim Michele Richardson. Please join us if you can. The future books we are reading are....

August 1st - "The Seven Sisters" by Lucinda Riley

September 5th - "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver

October 3rd - "We Begin at the End" by Chris Whitaker

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

Giving/Pledge Updates

Second Quarter 2023 giving statements will be provided this month. Please contact Joe Bullock if you have any questions.



Please make the following change in your church directory.

Jim Beauchemin
Dixie Burton
 24697 N. 174th Lane
 Surprise, Arizona 85387
 805-390-7236 - Dixie
 805-217-7861 - Jim

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