

newhope news

Lutheran Church - Agoura Hills

September, 2023

“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.” (1 Corinthians 12:4-11)

We are all called to share what we have received.

Our theme for this September at New Hope is “Stories of Stewardship.” How does your stewardship make a difference in this church or our community? How does your generosity reach out into the wider world? We are going to take a moment to share and celebrate those stories. New Hope is doing God’s work!

We are all called to serve in our own ways. Every Sunday morning, I see this happening. There is someone setting up communion, volunteers in the tech booth, greeters at the door, musicians practicing, folks preparing snacks, and countless other things. That is a wide variety of gifts! It all helps to make New Hope a loving and hospitable place.

But it is not just about Sundays. I can look into our church parking lot on any day of the week, at just about any time, and see it full of cars. The church has opened our doors to AA meetings and countless other groups. We’ve become known as a safe place for healing and transformation. When you make a donation to New Hope, it is not just about paying bills or keeping the lights on. It is about providing a sacred space for our entire community. Your stewardship matters.

This September, I invite you to ponder an important question: how have you seen stewardship make a difference? How has this church impacted your own life? How has it made a difference to the people living in our neighborhood? Look for those stories and share them.

And with those stories in mind, perhaps even seek out new ways to serve. Think broadly and creatively! Stewardship is not just about finances, but it is about time and talents as well. As this passage from 1 Corinthians reminds us, the Spirit works within you. You can be the one to share God’s love with the world.

You are God’s hands.

*Peace,
Pastor Steve Simpson*

From Deacon Lynn

On Sunday we celebrated the ordination of Natalie Larkin into the ministry of Word & Service (Deacon.) It's been a long journey for her, starting quite a few years ago when she attended seminary to become what was then called an Associate in Ministry (AIM) for spiritual direction. She ended up having to put things on hold for a while. AIMs became part of the Deacon's roster, and Natalie retired from her teaching job and kept being a Spiritual Director. Finally about two years ago she began the candidacy process to become a Deacon. She will now serve as the Spiritual Director to the Southwest California Synod.



Here is the picture you're most likely to see from Natalie's ordination, the one with Deacon Natalie flanked by Bishop Brenda Bos and the pastor who preached at the service, Rev. Elizabeth Rechter. It's a lovely picture, but I'd like to show you a couple of the ones you might not see otherwise. It takes a lot of work to put on a service as complicated as an ordination, and there were hours of preparation and rehearsal.

Here are the six people who provided the music for the service. Our former music director Aleta Braxton played the piano, and four of our regular singers (Terry, Fred, Mia and Mary Ann) joined Natalie's mom Beverly to provide music.



And last, but definitely not least, are the folks we almost never see, who put in tremendous amounts of work: our church Administrator and tech guru, Laurie Scott, and her tech crew, in this case, Calvin and Gabe. A day like Sunday wouldn't be complete without the people we don't see.

Blessings, Deacon Lynn

Ordination Day!

Finally! After a 25-year meandering journey of seminary courses, internships, writing essays, interview panels, and retreats, the service of ordination to become a deacon in the ELCA was truly a celebration. What meant the most to me was being surrounded by friends, family, colleagues, church members — the Body of Christ. The power of the scripture readings, the lovely music, the art on the bulletin and slides, the involvement of so many people moved me. All nerves vanished when I felt the presence of the Spirit fill me with love. I thought the lights might inhibit me from seeing the gathering, but when I looked, I could see your faces smiling and supportive. Wow! What a spirit-filled moment!

A huge heart of gratitude for everyone who participated. Thanks to Bishop Brenda Bos, Rev. Elizabeth Rechter, Pastor Steve, Deacon Lynn, Laurie, the music team, the AV technicians, and the fellowship committee who put together such a lovely reception. A special thank you to Kathy Rogers who made the beautiful deacon stole, and to my small group, Taste of Grace, who commissioned her to make it. I loved having my mom fly in for the special day, my niece Jaclyn for reading a prayer petition (and my grandniece Journey for being there building blocks in the play area.) So much gratitude for those who did readings. I felt surrounded and loved by a cloud of witnesses.

So, all I can wonder is, what's next? What does the Holy Spirit have in mind for me on this long and winding journey?

Deacon Natalie Larkin



Safety and Security Ministry Update



Heartfelt thanks to the 22 members and staff who have given their time and made the commitment to take and use the CPR/AED training. This is such an important step in preparing our congregation for a medical emergency. This is also knowledge we can use in our community should the need arise. Whether you were one of these participants or not, please make a mental note as to the location of the AED (Automated External Defibrillator) in the hall across from Laurie's office. It is a lifesaver!!

And, thank you for your patience as we adjust to having the front doors locked at 10:10 AM as recommended to us by church safety experts. We have 8 people who have volunteered to be responsible on a rotating basis for remaining at the door until 10:10. They then have a tablet with the Ring view of the front door with them during the service so they can let anyone in who comes after.

What's next?

Our parking lot will see some changes starting with directional arrows on orange cones that direct traffic to slow at the top of the driveway, turn right and follow the parking lot around to the left continuing left and back down the driveway when exiting. This is designed to protect those dropping off or being dropped off, crossing before and after the service to and from their cars and all the group participants who use our facilities, including children, throughout the week. Once they go up, please help us keep the traffic flowing in a safe manner.

We are getting quotes to secure the sanctuary doors when not in use and designing the chapel (currently the nursery) to create a place for prayer by group attendees who currently find refuge in the sanctuary.

We have more areas we are focusing on and those will be shared once plans are complete.

If you have any suggestions as to a safety or security measure we should be taking, please share those with Laurie.

In the meantime, stay safe and secure.

Gaye Khan





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

Chuck Kemmerer fell and broke some ribs and punctured a lung.

Continued prayers of healing for Evelyn Colby, Sandy Cowden, Lou Fiore, Steve Frye, Lyla Grant, Kara Henkel, 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, Rob and 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.



Please make the following change in your church directory.

Gerda Sawaya

805-657-6876 - cell number only



We need a volunteer to serve as the liaison between the support groups that meet at New Hope and the church office. 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 Bible Study and Fellowship

Thursdays at 8:30 AM

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, September 3rd 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.



The annual Congregational Meeting to elect Council members will be held following worship on Sunday, September 24th. A financial update will be shared during the meeting. In addition, a written report of committee activities for the first eight months and proposed accomplishments for the remainder of 2023 will be available. Please plan to stay for the brief meeting. Thank you.



Supper's 8

Supper's 8 started up again in June and all that attended enjoyed themselves and had a delicious meal. We will be meeting again soon. If you didn't sign up and would like to join us, it's not too late. Let Gail McGinnis know (gsmcginnis@roadrunner.com) and she will add you to the list. We'd love to have more adults join us. Our next grouping will be in September, October, and November

"Remember there's no such thing as a small act of kindness."

- Scott Adams

LSSSC to Host Color of Hope Gala at Historic Mission Inn in Riverside on October 7th

Lutheran Social Services of Southern California (LSSSC) - a leading provider of social services programs in Southern California - will host its annual [Color of Hope Gala & Awards](#) on Saturday, October 7th at the historic Mission Inn in Riverside. The gala theme Mission Possible - a twist on the Mission Impossible movies - ties into their efforts to transform the San Bernardino Central City Lutheran Mission (CCLM) into a comprehensive Community Wellness Campus. Our New Hope Lutheran member, Dr. Terry Paulson, has been nominated for their 2023 H.O.P.E. Award in the Lifetime Achievement Award category. With a fundraising goal of \$320,000, the evening includes a welcome reception with silent auction, gourmet dinner and desserts, awards ceremony, speakers, live auction, and a live art project and subsequent auction of an original art piece by artist and homeless advocate Brian Peterson from the Faces of Mankind project. General admission tickets are \$150 (early sales). For those not able to attend in person, virtual attendance can be secured for \$50. For tickets visit www.lsssc.org or call (714) 685-1800 ext. 1213. The Mission Inn is located at 3649 Mission Inn Avenue and complimentary parking will be provided.





LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF NEEDS OUR HELP

For more than 75 years, LWR has responded to war, disaster, and emergency by turning the compassion of kit makers like you into tangible items that meet urgent needs and offer glimpses of hope for families experiencing crisis.

The Social Justice Small Group is asking for donations to prepare personal hygiene kits for people in need throughout the world. Although a hygiene kit might seem like a drop of help in an ocean of need, these basic necessities might be impossible for families to find on their own in the wake of disaster.

Each kit contains the following: towel, bar of soap, toothbrush, nail clippers, comb, at a cost of approximately \$10 per kit including shipping. Toothpaste is added at the collection site. If you would like to donate, please indicate LWR on your check. A collection basket will be found in the narthex during the month of September.

The Social Justice Small Group will be purchasing the needed items and then will sponsor a kit making party after church on Sunday, October 1st. The number of kits we can provide will be decided by the amount of donations. Thank you in advance for your generosity!

Sue Poulson



2024 Council

We give thanks to Gail McGinnis for volunteering to run for a 3-year term and to Burnis Reed for volunteering to run to complete the two years remaining on Chuck Titcomb's term. One 3-year term remains. If you feel the Spirit calling you to run, please contact Karen Ingram at 805-390-9298 by September 9th. The 2024 Council will be setting the course for New Hope's next 50 years of Ministry. This is an exciting time to be part of the journey.



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.



2022 Audit Committee

Council has appointed Steve Chew, Dutch Schulze, and Alison Rowe to conduct the audit of our 2022 finances. They are already hard at work. Please join Council in thanking them for saying YES when asked to take on this important and necessary task.

You are invited to be a part of our 50th Anniversary Timeline!

We would like to include your household on our 50th Anniversary Timeline posted on the bulletin board in the main hallway. Flowers, butterflies and sun bursts are located in the white basket on the bulletin board ledge.

Please choose one, add your household name and the year you first came to New Hope, then pin it closest to date you started attending New Hope.



Alpha is coming to New Hope
Sunday, September 10th
at 11:15a.m.

**IS THERE
MORE TO
LIFE THAN
THIS?**

explore
the basics
of the
Christian
faith



Join us for fellowship and
lunch followed by a short
video and then discussion
Contact the church office to signup

Explore the basics of the Christian faith - ALPHA is for EVERYONE!

GIVE YOURSELF AND THOSE YOU KNOW the gift of “New Hope” by signing up to attend Alpha. The Alpha Course is a FUN and FREE 10-week exploration into the Christian faith, providing a safe environment to explore the big questions of life and faith. Alpha combines learning with laughter. Whether you're new to New Hope Lutheran, investigating Christianity, or just looking for faith renewal, Alpha offers an opportunity to make new friends and deepen your faith. No question is regarded as too simple or too complicated. IN FACT, if anyone has questions about God, this is the place and the program to ask them. Feel free to invite friends. Christians, seekers, and non-believers are all welcome. This is a relaxed, non-pressure environment. Come and see for yourself.

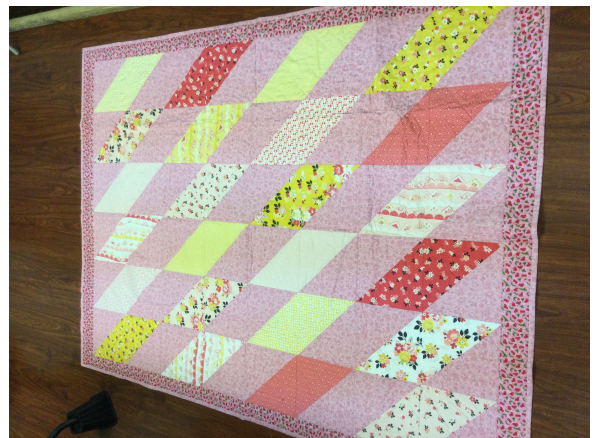
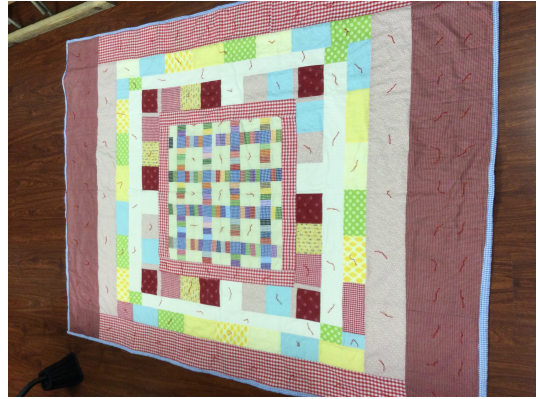
Alpha starts after church on Sunday, September 10th. Join us for fellowship and lunch at 11:15 AM followed by a short video and then discussion. You'll be out by 1:15 PM. Talk to Terry or Lorie Paulson if you want more information!

Terry Paulson, PhD

Piece Makers

The ladies of Piece Makers have made many beautiful quilts to be sent off to Lutheran World Relief in October. This is a sample of some of the quilts that have been made. We plan to bless the quilts on Sunday, September 24th before they are sent off. We have appreciated those who have contributed financially for the batting needed for each quilt. Next we will need contributions for the shipping costs.

Thank you for encouraging us to do this service for LWR.





Drop your quarters in the
laundry love jar!

Join New Hope Church in
helping low-income
neighbors in our community
have clean laundry.



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



September Birthdays

- 1 Suzie Frye
- 8 Kevin Barry
- 16 Mary Gallagher
- 17 Moeed Khan
- Renee Olmstead
- 18 Phyllis Rickert
- 19 Bailey Hershman
- 22 Evan Taylor
- 27 Lou Fiore



The daytime Book Club will meet at 11:30 AM on Zoom and in person on Tuesday, September 5th to discuss "Demon Copperhead" by Barbara Kingsolver. Please join us if you can. The future books we are reading are....

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

November 7th - "Thursday Murder Club" by Richard Osman

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

"What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



"He drew a circle that shut me out -

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

But love and I had the wit to win:

We drew a circle and took him In!"

-Edwin Markham

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