

newhope news

Lutheran Church - Agoura Hills

January 2026

“I waited patiently upon the Lord, who stooped to me and heard my cry. The Lord lifted me out of the desolate pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a high cliff, making my footing sure.”
(Psalm 40:1-2, one of our readings for January 18)

Have you ever had your car stuck in the mud or the snow? When I was living in Pennsylvania, I remember one snowy winter when my car got stuck frequently. I had to keep a snow shovel and a box of cat litter (to give traction for the wheels) in the trunk. I struggled up a good number of icy hills and dug myself out of a number of parking lots. I have to say: I am glad not to be living in a place with snow anymore!

Being stuck is a terrible feeling. When the psalms talk about it, of course, it is not about being literally caught in the mud. But so often we feel emotionally stuck. Sadness and worry can cling to us, making us feel trapped. Sometimes it even feels like we don't have a big enough shovel, and there is no way to dig out.

In these moments, the psalms speak a sacred promise to us: you are not alone. God is always with you. Sometimes we might have to wait for a while, but the Lord's promise is always to lift us up.

When have you seen God helping you? For me, it is often in the voices of the people I love and trust. When I am feeling down, a good friend or a member of my family will be there to catch me. That is what the Holy Spirit looks like. God works through us so that we can support one another.

As we continue through this season of winter, look for the Lord. You will find God in the faces of your friends, your family, and the people you trust. And even in the moments when nobody else is around, remember that you are not alone. Christ is always with you, drawing you close. You are loved.

Peace,
Pastor Steve Simpson



December 16, 2025

Dear Friends of Harbor House,

We wish you a Happy Hanukkah, a Merry Christmas, and a very Happy New Year. We close out 2025 with a deep sense of relief for all those we've been able to help and with gratitude that amid the economic hardship all around us we were able to lift families up and offer some stability. Your generosity made this possible.

Our staff work tirelessly to assist our neighbors. So many volunteers cook meals, make sandwiches, and offer kindness to those who are alone. So many of you donated to our Adopt a Family and continue to ask, "How can I help?"

We were born to heal the world, and in a year such as this one we are compelled to reach out to those who are afraid and worried about so many things.

"Majesty in the midst of the mundane. Holiness in the filth of sheep manure and sweat. Divinity entered the world on the floor of a stable, through the womb of a unwed teenager and in the presence of a simple carpenter." - Max Lucado

Thank you for all you do to make this work possible! And may the new year bless our lives and our work in ways we cannot yet imagine.

Denise Cortes

Harbor House Executive Director

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

Former member, Ann Nelson, passed away.

Continued prayers of healing for Joe Bulock, Steve Chew, Sandy Cowden, Mariella Edgar, Joy Elazary, Mary Ann Fiore, Suzie Frye, Lyla Grant, Ben and Kara Henkel, Vi and Chuck Kemmerer, Beverly Larkin, Joyce Lawson, Dorr and Joan Looman, Elinor Martin, Katie Jo McCarthy, Jim and Cheryl Merrill, Katie Murray, Renee Olmstead, Jerry Orefice, Karen Reed, Wayne Rickert, Madeline Swope, Don and Ardy Tamburro, and Jane Taschereau.

Prayers for our servicemen - Heather Brown, Keith Brown, Farrah Hayden, and Ikenna Olelewe.



Thank you, everyone who came out to decorate the church for Christmas! We had a wonderful enthusiastic group who did a magnificent job making our church festive and beautiful to welcome the Christ Child.

Appreciation goes out to: Linda and Kevin Barry, John Bell, Natalie Larkin, Tom LaVanne, Gail and Gary McGinnis, Sarah and Uche Olelewe, Lorie and Terry Paulson, Burnis Reed, Kris Salmon, Bonnie Schulze, Laurie Scott, and Pastor Steve.

An extra special thank you goes out to Bonnie and John Bell and

Laurie Scott for helping me set up the day before. Also a big thank you goes out to Calvin Beeker and Gabe Hoffman for putting out the Christmas Eve banner and to Laurie Scott for lighting it so beautifully.

All helpers are welcome on Saturday, January 10th at 10:00 for take-down.

Blessed Christmas,
Karen Orefice



Social Justice Small Group

The Social Justice Small Group meets on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month from 2-3 PM. If you would like a safe place to discuss issues of social justice and how to respond to God's call to care for each other, you are welcome to join. Please contact Karen Ingram to receive the link. We are currently supporting Ventura County's Friends of Fieldworkers.



First Monday Prayer Gathering

Our First Monday Prayer gathering for 2026 will be held January 4th at 5 PM in the Prayer Chapel. Please join us as we pray for the individuals on our prayer chain, as well as concerns for our community at large. We will also pray for the new year. Prayers to help people achieve their 2026 resolutions. Prayers for hope and peace in a broken world. Prayers that New Hope continues to be a blessing to those in need or seeking God's love.



Children's Sunday School is now being held on the 2nd Sunday of the month only. We are using the Spark Children's Bible to share Bible stories and will be learning some songs and doing crafts. All children are welcome!



A fun evening was had by all that attended the church Christmas dinner on December 14th!

Donate to the Altar Flower Fund

Let us recognize your special
someone or event during our
worship service announcements
and in our newsletter

Dedicate flowers online at:

[www.newHopeAgoura.org/
altar-flower-donations](http://www.newHopeAgoura.org/altar-flower-donations)



Join us for
the next

LADIES CRAFT & CHAT
Jan. 3rd | 10AM-12PM

at the home of
Bonnie Bell

Drinks are provided -
Last names "A-M" bring
snacks

See Bonnie for more info



A graphic for the Prayer Shawl Ministry. On the left, the title "Prayer Shawl Ministry" is written in a cursive font. Below it, the text "knit, loom, crochet, & pray" is written in a smaller, sans-serif font. To the right of this text is a small illustration of a red ball of yarn with a red heart and a red string. On the right side of the graphic is a photograph of a person's hands knitting a shawl with colorful yarn. At the bottom, the website address "NewHopeAgoura.org/ministries/prayer-shawl-ministry/" is displayed in a red font.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

knit, loom,
crochet, &
pray

*Created to comfort and support those in
need or to celebrate special events*

For more information go to:

NewHopeAgoura.org/ministries/prayer-shawl-ministry/

We will meet on Sunday, January 4th at 9:15 AM.



Our quilting group meets every other Thursday,
from 9:30a.m to 1p.m.

We will meet again on January 15th

See Kathy Rogers for more information about this ministry,
or how you can donate to the cost of materials.



Hot Meal Program

the 3rd Monday of each month

**Volunteer to bake & deliver
pot pies to Holy Trinity
church. Pies & supplies are
provided by New Hope.**

Sign-up Sunday in the Narthex!



New Hope Church participates in the Harbor House Hot Meal Program by providing 50 hot chicken pot pies, salads, and desserts each month. Our New Hope volunteers bake the pies then deliver them to Holy Trinity Lutheran Church on the 3rd Monday of each month, between 4:00 - 4:30 PM. Emails to follow. Thank you to all. The frozen pies and supplies are provided by New Hope. Any questions, text Karen Reed at (805) 405-0518.



newHope
Lutheran
Church

Helping neighbors in
our community have
clean laundry



Drop your quarters in the Laundry Love jar!

The cost of washing is \$2.50 for small loads and up to \$6.50 for large washers. Drying time is \$.25 per 5 minutes.

God bless you for your prayers and continued support of Laundry Love, helping the needy in our community! Volunteers are also appreciated! See Burnis Reed for more information.

ITEMS NEEDED FOR MANNA THIS MONTH

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

Canned Pasta Sauce

Broth - Canned or Soft Sided Carton

Instant Ramen

Instant Mashed Potatoes

Canned Soup - any kind

Canned meat - Chicken, Ham or Spam

Coffee or Tea or Hot Chocolate

Canned Beans - Red, Navy, White, Kidney or Garbanzo

Canned Baked Beans, Refried Beans or Chili

Canned Pasta - Raviolis or Spaghetios

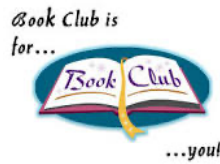


Manna
CONEJO VALLEY FOOD BANK



January Birthdays

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



The daytime Book Club will meet at 11:30 AM on Zoom and/or at church on February 3rd to discuss "Broken Country" by Clare Leslie Hall.

The future books we are reading are...

March 3rd - "The Briar Club" by Kate Quinn

April 7th - "The Personal Librarian" by Marie Benedict and Victoria Christopher Murray

The deadline for the February newsletter is January 24th. Be sure to email them to gsmcginnis@roadrunner.com

2026 Leadership

Our 2026 Council was installed during worship on Sunday, December 28th. Please keep Linda Barry, John Bell, Joe Bullock, Mary Ann Fiore, Karen Ingram, Gaye Khan, Natalie Larkin, Gail McGinnis, Burnis Reed, Dutch Schulze and Pastor Steve in your prayers.

In addition, we give thanks for their hours of service and leadership and ask for your prayers for Chriss Alwood (Staff Relations), Gary Alwood (Financial Secretary), Kathy Rogers (Counter) and Joe Bullock (Counter).

And our wonderful staff: Laurie Scott, David Cohen, and Pastor Steve.

And YOU! Each of you is an essential part of New Hope and our ministry. Prayers and best wishes for you and yours in 2026.

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January