## SIGNS OF NEW LIFE





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#### Walk in Newness of Life Pastor Clayton Faulkner

Once again, the season of Advent is upon us. While the rest of the world rushes on ahead into Christmas, the church takes its sweet time waiting for the baby to arrive. Part of truly taking our time means that we don't even acknowledge the baby until somewhere in the late middle/early ending of Advent. Advent begins not with a birth, but with the end of all things, incorporating suffering and darkness, watching and waiting.

I realize this is kind of a bummer. The rest of the world is ready for you to focus on gift wrap and candy canes. But church is here reminding you to pump your brakes. There is plenty of time for feasting once the baby arrives (supposedly, twelve whole days)! And the feast is much more precious and joyous when it follows the fast.

Advent begins with apocalypse. Then, slowly, it unfurls to include the one who comes baptizing, preparing the way for One who is greater. And finally, at the last moment, we hear about a young girl, an angel's announcement, and the thrilling possibilities that God works through the impossible. The time of Advent is pregnant with so much meaning. I encourage you to savor and appreciate it. Try using a family practice during Advent to enhance the season. Daily devotions, lighting candles, or using a daily calendar are all possibilities.

"According to the Christian worldview, humans need God to bring us life and salvation, and Christmas celebrates this coming of God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Christians affirm that Christ comes not only in a past event but also in our present life and the world's unfolding future. So it is that Advent is not about Mary's pregnancy but about the church's continual prayer that God will come (the root meaning of "advent") to us, bringing life to a dying world. Advent in the northern hemisphere is a time to meditate on the darkness in the universe, the social order, the lives of many people, and our own hearts, and to pray for God's salvation and wholeness for all" (Keeping Time: The Church's Year, Augsburg Fortress, 2009, pg. 73).

Our church is in a season of experiencing God's gift of new life. We are welcoming new members and seeing increased participation in the life of the church. We are also near the completion of a process to discover the guiding statement that will carry New Life into the future. We value and honor the ways New Life has flourished in its history of being the church here in Pearland. This new guiding statement will describe who we discern God is calling us to be as we move into the future. It will ground and anchor the type of ministry we do in this community for

the next foreseeable season. This work is being led by our Vision Team that includes Bubba, Abby, Becca, Lisa, Laura, Cathy, and Evelyn.



Our guiding statement contains three parts: vision, mission, and core values. The vision of New Life is *what* we hope to do in the future, the end result of the church we dream to be. The mission of New Life is *why* our church is here, our purpose for existence. The core values of New Life state *how* we do ministry and what kinds of things we care about. Notice the italicized words. Our vision is what we hope to do. Our mission is why we do it. Our core values are how we go about doing it.

One of the final pieces of this process of creating a new guiding statement is our listening sessions and the online listening survey. There's still time to participate in the survey if you haven't already. One of the survey questions asks, "Select the top 5 values that you most identify with New Life Lutheran Church." What follows the question is a list of 50 different values including a brief definition of each. As we begin to compile the answers to this survey, we can already see certain core values that rise to the top. These are the values that people identify New Life with over and over again. I want to share four of them:

CARING: Providing compassion for the needs of others.

SERVING: Helping others and caring for those in need.

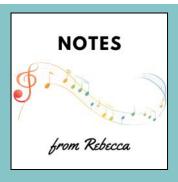
HOSPITALITY: Being intentionally welcoming, especially of guests and strangers, with genuine care and concern for their needs.

FAMILY: A group of people in a close, meaningful relationship, including, but not limited to, those related by blood.

Those are strong words that describe the ministry of New Life. Providing compassionate care for those in need. Welcoming and including all people and inviting them into meaningful relationship and community. These words describe who we feel God is calling us to be as a church. Stay tuned for the full report from the Vision Team about our guiding statement. It will be shared at the congregational meeting in January 2024.









#### Notes from Rebecca Rebecca McDonald, Director of Worship and Music

A-CAROLING WE WILL GO

I am so excited to go Christmas caroling with you all this year! There is room for everyone, so please consider joining us if you're able. Our various caroling events are a wonderful way to connect with our community and share the Christmas spirit. You are invited to join us for any or all of the following:

- Thursday Dec. 21 at 2:00 PM: caroling at the Landing at Watercrest Assisted Living
- Friday Dec. 22 at 6:00 PM: caroling at Trinity Oaks of Pearland Assisted Living
- Friday Dec. 22 at 7:00 PM: cookies and cocoa at New Life in the fellowship hall
- Friday Dec. 22 at 7:30 PM: caroling in the neighborhood around New Life

#### CAROLING FAQ's

#### What can I expect?

At both of the assisted living facilities we will sing a medley of Christmas carols with the residents. We'll share some cookies and fellowship afterwards. The entire visit should be about 45 minutes. In our neighborhood, we'll walk from house to house and sing carols for our neighbors, probably for about an hour.

#### How can I help?

Cookies, cookies, and more cookies! We have permission from both of the senior facilities to share cookies with the residents. We'll also have cookies and cocoa at the church in between the two sessions on Friday. If you plan to visit either Watercrest (Thursday 2:00) or Trinity Oaks (Friday 6:00), please consider bringing some simple cookies to share with the seniors. Cookies or other desserts are also welcomed for sharing with each other in the fellowship hall at 7:00 Friday. I could definitely use some volunteers to help set up cocoa and desserts for us; please let me know if you're available to help.

music@newlifelutheran.com

#### What if I'm only available part of the time?

No problem! You can pick and choose which parts to attend. If you have a commitment on Friday night, maybe you can join us on Thursday at 2:00. Or you could just visit Trinity Oaks at 6:00 on Friday and leave right after that. If you get home from work late on Friday, you could join us for cookies at 7:00 and caroling afterwards. You get the idea, it's fine for people to drop in and out as needed.

#### What should I wear?

Depending on what the weather is like, be sure to dress warmly and wear comfortable shoes if you're planning to carol in the neighborhood. For everyone, cozy and festive wear is in order. Time for Santa hats, jingle bells, and of course your ugly Christmas sweaters!

#### What if I can't sing?

There is an African proverb which says, "If you can walk, you can dance. If you can talk, you can sing." While I'll reserve judgement on your dancing, I do want to emphasize that EVERYONE is welcome to join us for caroling. Absolutely no singing experience is necessary, just an enjoyment of Christmas carols and a desire to share in the joy!

#### What songs are we singing?

We'll sing a mixture of sacred and secular Christmas songs, all of them very familiar. Everything from Silent Night and The First Noel to Jingle Bells and Deck the Halls are on the list.

#### What if I don't know the words?

Everyone will receive a song sheet with all the words printed out.

#### Where are the senior living facilities located?

The Landing at Watercrest is at 2907 Broadway Bend Drive, which is at the intersection of Kirby and Broadway (518), opposite the Pearland Town Center. Trinity Oaks is at 3033 Pearland Parkway, next to Parkway Church and just south of the intersection of Broadway and Pearland Parkway.

#### Why are we visiting these particular facilities?

Trinity Oaks is just two miles from New Life. A group from New Life sang for their residents on God's Work Our Hands Sunday, and had a very warm reception. The Watercrest facility actually reached out to us recently, and were eager for us to bring some Christmas cheer to their residents. I'm excited to grow and develop these relationships in our community.

#### Who can participate?

Everyone! All ages are welcome. Invite your visiting family and friends to join us, too. Hope to see you there!



Rylynn, Zachary, and Reggie received their study Bibles from the church on November 5, 2023.



# Children's Community Christmas Party!

December 16<sup>th</sup> 11:00 AM-2:00 PM

Bring a canned good for Christian Helping Hands.

New Life Lutheran Church 3521 E. Orange St., Pearland TX 77581

Bingo Crafts Snacks Games

Special guest! Win bingo prizes!
This Event is FREE!

#### **Upcoming Events**

**Greening/Decorating for Advent:** Saturday, December 2 at 10:00 AM. Please lend a hand!

**Houston Lutheran Chorale Christmas Concert:** New Life is hosting a Christmas concert on Saturday, December 2 at 7:30 PM. Admission is free, there will be a free-will offering. Join us as we celebrate the birth of Jesus with songs and familiar carols.

**Senior Lunch:** All Seniors 55+ are welcome to join us for lunch on Wednesday, December 6 in the fellowship hall at 12:00 PM. Join us for food and fellowship, as well as packing up Seafarer Christmas boxes!

**Soup Supper and Midweek Advent Service:** We will gather on Wednesday evenings in December for food, fellowship, and a time of worship including Holden Evening Prayer. Wednesday services will be held on December 6, 13, and 20. Soup Supper begins at 5:45 PM, followed by choir rehearsal at 6:15 PM. The service will begin in the sanctuary at 7:00 PM. Sign up sheets for the potluck meals are in the narthex.

**WELCA Christmas Party:** On Sunday, December 10 all women of the church (including youth 8 years and older) are invited to gather at noon in the Fellowship Hall for lunch. Lunch will be provided. Please bring a dessert or fruit to share (optional). A \$20 gift exchange will also take place (optional). Please bring a free will offering or pantry item to be donated to Christian Helping Hands. Theme dress attire is pink. RSVP by December 3 through the Facebook event or the sign up sheet in the narthex.

Mary and Martha Bible Study: All women of the church are welcome to join us for a Bible study in the fellowship hall on Wednesday, December 13 at 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM.

**Children's Christmas Party:** Saturday, December 16 at 11:00 AM. Bingo prizes, crafts, pizza, and a surprise guest! Invite your friends and family.

**Children's Christmas Pageant** is on Sunday, December 17 at 9:15 AM. Rehearsal is on Saturday, December 16 at 9:30 AM (before the Christmas party). We need children and youth of all ages to participate in our presentation. Parent helpers needed for costumes and organizing. See Aimee Castillo for details.

**Community Christmas Caroling:** Thursday, December 21 and Friday, December 22. See Rebecca's article on pg. 4 for details.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent:** We will combine Sunday morning worship on December 24 for ONE service at 9:30 AM.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship Services:** Sunday, December 24 at 4:00 and 7:00 PM.

**First Sunday of Christmas:** We will combine Sunday morning worship on New Year's Eve, December 31 for ONE service at 9:30 AM.

#### **Quilters**

New Life Quilters sold over 20 guilts on Reformation Sunday! The rest were sent to Lutheran World Relief. They meet every Tuesday at 9:30 AM in the Fellowship Hall and all women are welcome to help make guilts and have fellowship with the ladies.

Quilting is a year-round activity and once the quilts are sent to LWR, the work of creating more for next year begins.



Thank You



#### **Prayer Shawl Thanks from Martha Faulkner**

Dear New Zife Sutheron Church, I want to personally thanh the Church for all the prayers and thoughtfullness during Juis illness + death. I expecially want to thank the Prayer of haw Ministry for their lovely showly. Jin's stayed on his bed till his death. It was a great comfort to me. Thanks again great comfort to me. Thanks again

#### Deacon Beth Hartfiel returned to New Life to preach for WELCA Ingathering Sunday on November 19, 2023.



#### Thank You! From Church Council and Staff

- Nancy B. for serving as Mission Investment Fund acct administrator.
- Bereavement Team for funeral support during Rebecca M. lunch.
- Linda S. and Team for Halloween party.
- Property Team for maintenance projects.
- Rebecca M. for Reformation Sunday music.
- Richard B., Sparky K., and Peter W. for Reformation Sunday music.
- Pastor Clayton and Rebecca M. for Reformation Sunday financial support.
- Lucas B. for help during council meeting.
- All who donated to Senior Lunch bingo prizes.
- Ronnie S. for turkey donation to CHH.
- Quilting Team for Reformation Sunday quilt display and sale.
- Bubba F. and John G. for LWR delivery.
- Aimee C. for coordinating our blood drive.
- Walt W., Doug B., and Charlie G. for repairing the pully in the sanctuary.
- Vince G. for the new parking lot lights.
- Julie W. for donating the beautiful greeting cards that were purchased in Pennsylvania.

We appreciate you ALL so much!

#### **Financial Snapshot**

Giving in Nov 2023 (through Nov 28) = \$19,973.25 (78.9%)

Giving needed per month = \$25,328.00

Giving January—November 2023 = \$232,773.72 (83.5%)

Giving needed January—Oct 2023 = \$278,608.00

## Christian Helping Hands Food Pantry Update Judy Foucheaux

The donations to Christian Helping Hands have been very generous this month of November. With the help of Linda and Ronnie Stavinoha, Doug and Lynn Barron, Robin Gottleib (and sister)

and a generous donation from Bob Leach, we have given over 1000 lbs. of food stuff, turkeys, etc. to CHH. The donations to the church grocery basket have been very big too. CHH is giving food to over 40 families a day, 5 days a week. A lot of families had a nice Thanksgiving dinner with the help of your donations. Thank you very much.

#### Environews Helen Beckman

Friday, December 1, from 6 to 9 PM celebrate Hometown Christmas Festival at Independence Park in Pearland. Parking is at Pearland High School. Stage entertainment features Chanel 11 meteorologist David Paul, music, Mayor Cole, City Council Members, Community leaders and SANTA CLAUS. Come enjoy the light show, food trucks, and shopping.

**Saturday, December 2,** after you help **decorate the church at 10 AM**, go to **see the Pearland Christmas Parade at 6 PM** on Broadway (FM 518) beginning at Old Alvin Rd. and proceeding to Pearland Parkway. If you watch at the corner of 518 and Old Alvin you should be able to **get back to church in time for the Lutheran Chorale performance at 7:30.** 

**Saturday, December 9, from 9 to 1** is the monthly paper shredding event at the Stella Roberts Recycling Center (SRRC) Drive around to the back of the building. KPB members may shred up to 4 boxes free. Non members pay \$5 for up to 16 pounds of paper and 30 cents per additional pound. The next event will be January 13.

By now many of you have purchased and decorated your Christmas tree. Most get reusable artificial trees. Some of us still like having a living tree. There are potted trees that can be planted after Christmas. We got a potted tree for each child's first Christmas and then planted them and put lights on them each Christmas thereafter. There's no

guarantee they will survive. We have replaced a few and now I have one left, too big for me to decorate. I still get a large cut tree each year and after Epiphany, I try to recycle it. Our current waste contract in Pearland does not include yard waste composting. I may get it to the SRRC for use in coastal dune building. Last year I cut all the branches to be used for mulch around trees and bushes to protect from winter frost and the trunk is currently used for propping up my sagging clothes line to keep my sheets from dragging on the ground. The trunks also make great bean poles or stakes for holding up plants in the garden.

At the recent Keep Pearland Beautiful Plant Thyme Luncheon on Texas Arbor Day, the theme was trees. We had excellent speakers and I was able to visit with Jerry Bradshaw, Pearland's Urban Forester. He has agreed to advise us on where to plant our two mulberry trees and to give us advice on further tree plantings. Tree planting is a great way to clean the air, protect the soil from erosion, cool our homes, and provide habitat for wildlife. I enjoy the beauty, peace, and comfort of trees. God's presence becomes more intense and I am filled with joy and thanksgiving. May your Christmas Tree help you enjoy the blessings of the birth of our Savior.





#### What is a Memorial?

A memorial is a special monetary gift given in memory of a loved one or the loved one of a friend. Memorials are given instead of flowers at the time of death. They are a wonderful way to give a useful and lasting remembrance at the time of death.

At New Life, we have a tradition of giving memorials after the death of a member or the loved ones of fellow members. The gifts go into a "Memorial Fund" which is used for special needs at the church such as starting a legacy giving fund, or the gifts may be designated for a certain ministry.

A notice of the gift is sent to the family of the deceased by the church office. A record of the gift is included on the donor's quarterly financial statement if the donor is a member of New Life. Finally, the memorials and other special gifts contributed in memory of someone, or in honor of a person, or a special occasion, are recognized periodically in our Signs of New Life newsletter.



#### **2023 Memorial Contributions**

In Memory of Ruth Roberts

Helen Beckman

In Memory of Alan Fuller

Karen Dahse

**Tamsey Mims** 

In Memory of Jimmy Thurman

Karen Dahse

**Tamsey Mims** 

In Memory of Tim Faulkner

Karen Dahse

Zachary Minja

Nolan and Donna Patschke

Julie Watkins

Nancy Bryars

In Memory of Rebecca Mims

Karen Dahse

Judy Foucheaux

Nolan and Donna Patschke

Michelle K. Rivers

Carol Bruno

**Brenda Pritchett** 

Ronnie and Linda Stavinoha

Linda Hudgens

Julie Watkins

Nancy Bryars



#### Sunday School Classes will Resume on January 7, 2024

Most of our Sunday School classes are pausing to take a break for Advent and Christmas. The children and youth will prepare for their Christmas Pageant during the break (scheduled for December 17 at 9:15 AM in the Sanctuary).

### Meals on Wheels Update Barbara Flowers

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED THIS YEAR WITH THIS FANTASTIC MINISTRY!

Doug Barron, Lynn Barron, Helen Beckman, Nancy Bryars, Roland Bryars, Lynn Cope, Bubba Flowers, Marlene Heinrich, Becky Homerstad, Carol Jackman, Tamsey Mims, Donna Patschke, Cheryl Robinson, the Scott Family, Carole Wright, and Walt Wright!

We have had four volunteers (from outside the church) come forward this year to volunteer. All four of them have said that they want to be able to serve the people of our area. They are: Laura Cole, Minnie Martinez, Samaira Sirajee, and Jennifer Washington.

Mark your calendars for the 2024 dates:

Jan 8-12 Mar 4-8 Apr 29-May 3 Jun 24-28 Aug 19-23 Oct 14-18 Dec 9-13

I would love to see a few more people from our church become involved in this great program. It is for one week every 8 weeks and you only need to commit for one day. If you don't feel you can commit every time, we are always in need of substitutes.

Please give me a call. I will be glad to answer any questions you might have. My number is 713-817-1012.

\*\*As always, if you know someone who might benefit from this program, you can call Pearland Meals on Wheels @ 281-485-5081 for information.



#### **Meet Our New Members**



#### Grasiela (Grasie) Gomez

Joined New Life by affirmation of baptism on November 19, 2023.

"I am from a military family. All four of my siblings were born in different states. My father served in Vietnam. My mother was born in Mexico and I consider that to be my home town where we had a ranch that many people lived on. My brother, Pete, and I would love to hunt for arrowheads and artifacts. We grew up in Elsa, TX in the Rio Grande valley. I started working and got married to my husband, Hugo, at the age of 18. He was an accountant and a musician who played saxophone. We have four daughters and five grandchildren. I enjoy crocheting, ceramics, and painting. I also enjoyed gardening when I was younger, and I have two dogs."

#### **Brenda Pritchett**

Joined New Life by affirmation of baptism on November 19, 2023.

"I graduated from Pearland High School and attended San Jacinto College and the University of Houston. My family started attending St. Stephen's Lutheran Church when I was in high school. I was married to my husband, Jerry, for 45 years. I have two children, Jason and Amanda, and three grandchildren, Gracie, Colson, and Kendall. They all live in Santa Fe, TX. I like to fish, be around water, collect antiques, and attend craft shows."



#### **New Life Lutheran Church**

3521 E Orange St.

Pearland, TX 77581

Phone: (281) 485-1818

Website: NewLifeLutheran.com

Facebook: Facebook.com/NewLifePearland

#### **Church Staff**

Pastor: Rev. Dr. Clayton Faulkner (pastor@newlifelutheran.com)

Director of Worship and Music: Rebecca McDonald (music@newlifelutheran.com)

#### **Church Council**

President: Bryan Bradford Vice President: Doug Barron Secretary: Mary Ann Marcha

Treasurer: Julie Watkins

At Large: Lynn Cope, Vanessa Rincones, Tamsey Mims, Elna

Ritter

#### Make a Donation to our BEAR Toy Drive

BEARing Gifts, BEAR's holiday program provides brand-new holiday gifts to at-risk and CPS-involved children who may otherwise not experience the joy of the holiday season.

Please make sure all gifts are new and UNWRAPPED. Gifts can be donated in the box in the narthex until the deadline on Sunday, December 10.

Gifts can be purchased for children newborn – 17 years old. NEW gifts only, no used items. No candy, food items, or clothing (these resources are provided through BEAR's year round program). If a gift requires batteries, please include them. Do not gift wrap gifts/toys (donations of wrapping paper or gift bags are always appreciated for caregivers, though!).



Help BEAR fulfill the holiday wishes of over 23,000 abused, neglected, and at-risk children this holiday season through our BEARing Gifts program!



#### **Gift Suggestions**

#### Infants:

Nursery Toys, Teething Toys, Ride-On Toys, Sit-To-Stand Walkers, Activity Mats, Soft Building Blocks

#### Children (up to 12 years old):

Action Figures/Dolls, Tween Make-Up Sets, Arts and Crafts Kits, Science/Discovery Kits, Puzzles, Legos, Remote Control Cars/Helicopters

#### General Toys:

Bikes\*, Scooters, Sports Equipment (all types), Board Games, Handheld Gaming Device, Tablets

\*Bikes = please ensure they are **not** assembled and are still in the box.

#### Toddlers:

Toy Trucks/Cars, Action Figures/Dolls, Costume/Dress Up Items, Building Blocks, Stuffed Animals, Play Food/Dishes, Interactive Learning Toys (VTech)

#### Children (13+):

Tablets, Bluetooth Headphones, Digital/Instant Camera (with refills), Make-Up Sets, Nail Polish, Bath & Body Sets, Jewelry Items (both genders), Cologne/Perfume Sets, Purses/Wallets



Scan to learn more about BEARing Gifts!





3572 E TC Jester Blvd. Houston, TX 77018 I www.bearesourcehouston.org I 713.274.9850

# December 2023

teg	10:30am - Decorating for Advent 10:30am - Phoenix Group 4pm - Word Fellowship Christian 7:30pm - Houston Lutheran	4pm - Word Fellowship Christian 4pm - Word Fellowship Christian 10:30am - Phoenix Group 11am - Christmas Party @ 4pm - Word Fellowship Christian	10:30am - Phoenix Group 4pm - Word Fellowship Christian 10:30am - Phoenix Group 4pm - Word Fellowship Christian	©
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Ē	30	6pm - Property Team	29m - Christmas caroling at the	4
Wed	58	12pm - Senior Lunch @ Fellowship 5:45pm - Advent Soup Supper 7pm - Advent Midweek Service 9:30am - Mary Martha Bible Study 5:45pm - Advent Soup Supper 7pm - Advent Midweek Service	5:45pm - Advent Boup Bupper 7pm - Advent Midweek Service	0
Tue	58	9am - Quillers Workshop (Women) 7pm - Word Fellowship Christian 9am - Quillers Workshop (Women) 7pm - Word Fellowship Christian	9am - Quilters Workshop (Women) 7pm - Word Fellowship Christian 7pm - Quilters Workshop (Women) 7pm - Word Fellowship Christian	2
Mon	27	6:30pm - Girls Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) @ 8pm - Ahanon @ Sanctuary 6pm - Church Council Meeting @ 6:30pm - Girls Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) @ 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) @	6:30pm - diris Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) ® 8pm - AA-Anon ® Sanctuary 6:30pm - diris Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) ® 8pm - AA-Anon ® Sanctuary	-
ung	98	8am - Traditional Worship @ 10:30am - Contemporary Worship @ 10:30am - Traditional Worship @ 10:30am - Contemporary Worship 12pm - WELCA Christmas Party @ 12pm - Word Fellowship Christian	8am - Traditional Worship ® 9:15am - Christmas Pageant 10:30am - Contemporary Worship 12pm - Word Fellowship Christian 9:30am - Combined Worship ® 12pm - Word Fellowship Christian 4pm - Christmas Eve Worship ® 7pm - Christmas Eve Worship ®	New Year's Eve 9:30am - Combined Worship 12pm - Word Fellowship Christian