

NEW LIFE LUTHERAN CHURCH NEWSLETTER

# *SIGNS OF NEW LIFE*



**CONGREGATIONAL  
MEETING**  
**JANUARY 21**  
**ONE SERVICE AT 9:30 AM**

## **January 2024 In this Issue**

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## Walk in Newness of Life Pastor Clayton Faulkner

In the post-holiday haze, things can easily slip by unnoticed. After the build up to Christmas and the celebration of a new calendar year, it is easy to miss an important day in the life of the church. It's called Epiphany, a principal festival in the church calendar, and it always falls on January 6 (because the season of Christmas always extends for the 12 days following December 25). But because January 6 doesn't always fall on a Sunday, it often ends up on one of the other six days of the week that we are not accustomed to gathering on.

Epiphany is the feast of three kings, or wisemen, or the magi, whichever name you prefer. Epiphany literally means "manifestation" and it concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In readings from Isaiah (60:1, "Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.") and Ephesians (3:9, "...to make everyone see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things..."), that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

As the story goes, from the gospel according to Mathew, "...and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw that the star had stopped, they were overwhelmed with joy. On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh" (2:9-11).

I always love to draw attention to the verbs in this passage: the magi *saw* the star, were *overwhelmed*, *entered*, *saw* the child, *knelt*, *paid homage*, *opened*, and *offered* gifts. These are the same actions we are called to as disciples of Jesus. Like the magi, we are drawn to the presence of the Holy Spirit at work among us, seeing the Spirit's movement and signs. We become overwhelmed and enter the worship and fellowship of the community of God's people. It is there we see Christ, in the face of each other, in the words of the gospel proclaimed, and in the sacred actions of water, bread, and wine. Among these actions we are humbled to kneel and pay our homage of worship to God. And by our worship we are spiritually opened up into new creatures called to new ways of living and being, leaving the ways of the world behind. In thanksgiving we offer our praise, worship, and gifts.





There is still more mystery in the Epiphany. On this day the church celebrates the revealing of the Christ child as the Messiah, as exemplified by the gifts of the magi in Matthew's gospel: *gold*, a tribute to a king; *frankincense*, recalling religious sacrifice and prayer; and *myrrh*, an ointment used for embalming. Gifts for a king, and a priest, and One who will die.

Perhaps most key of all are the magi themselves. They represent something important in this story. The magi were not really kings, they were astrologers.

Many scholars believe the magi to be Zoroastrian priests, an ancient Iranian religion that goes back two thousand years before Christ, characterized by their belief in a never-ending battle between good and evil. Ultimately this battle between good and evil is played out in every choice made by their adherents.

So, these three gifts are presented to Jesus by emissaries of a *foreign* religion, which highlights something Matthew's gospel is trying to say: Jesus is the savior of the *entire* world, not just the Jewish world, not just the Christian world. Jesus is for everyone.

From the very beginning of Jesus' story, even while he's still a toddler making laps around Mary's knees, the whole world is recognizing that God has opened the story to them. The religion that God desires isn't something you have to be born into. Nor is it something geographically embedded in Israel. Nor is it only for those who speak a particular language.

What God desires isn't a religion at all. It's a way of being, embodied love, and incarnate joy. This new life is so good we can't keep it to ourselves, the whole world must know.

That is the story of Epiphany. It begs the question, "Who do you need to tell?"



## NOTES



*from Rebecca*



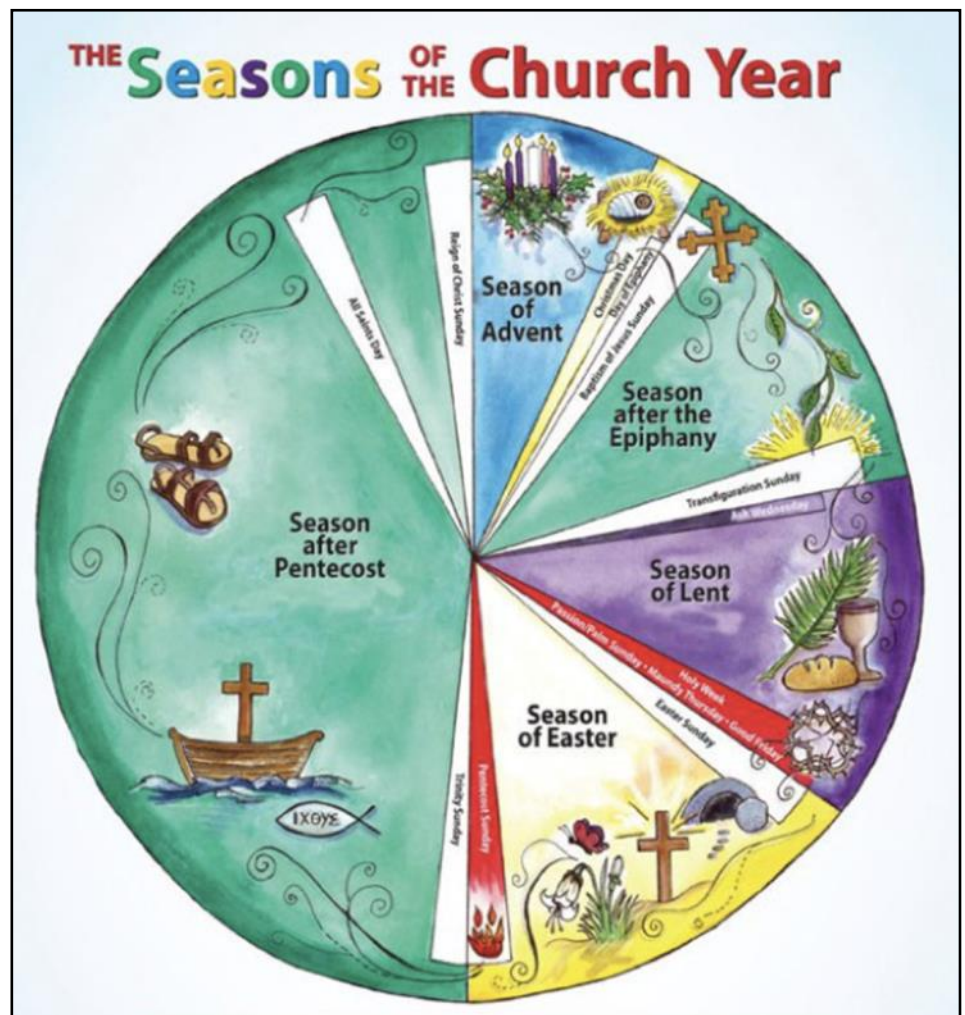
## Notes from Rebecca

### Rebecca McDonald, Director of Worship and Music

Happy New Year! December was a wonderful, vibrant month at New Life. Many thanks to everyone who contributed to all of the special music during the month, including our house band, choir, and newly formed orchestra! We were blessed by all the musical gifts you shared in worship throughout Advent and Christmas.

Thanks also to everyone who joined us for Christmas caroling, it was great fun! I can't wait for all the music ahead in the new year... or should I say, the new calendar year, since we've already begun the new church year. As we change our calendars to 2024, let's take a closer look at the church year ahead.

The calendar of the church begins with Advent, the season of waiting for the reappearance of Christ. Advent starts four Sundays before Christmas, which means Advent could start the last Sunday of November or the first Sunday in December. This church year, Advent began on December 3, which made the fourth Sunday of Advent the same day as Christmas Eve. We celebrate the birth of Christ on Christmas Day, which is fixed on December 25, and the twelve days of the Christmas season always fall on December 25 to January 5.





We celebrate Epiphany on January 6, traditionally the day when the Magi arrived to visit the baby Jesus. On the first Sunday after Epiphany we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus. This year, Epiphany falls on a Saturday, so we will observe both Epiphany and Jesus' baptism on the same Sunday, January 7. The length of the season of Epiphany depends on the date of Easter, and the last Sunday of the Epiphany season is Transfiguration Sunday, which will be on February 11 this year.

Ash Wednesday may fall as early as February 6 or as late as March 10; this year it's quite early on February 14. Ash Wednesday begins the penitential season of Lent, and it is always 46 days before Easter. On the Sunday before Easter we observe Palm Sunday, when Jesus rides into Jerusalem for the last time. The week following is known as Holy Week and includes Maundy Thursday (Jesus' last supper with his disciples) and Good Friday (Jesus' crucifixion). An Easter vigil may be kept on Saturday, and then we celebrate Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday with great joy. Easter is always the first Sunday after the full moon that falls on or after March 21. Confusing, right? Easter may fall as early as March 22 and as late as April 25, since it depends on the lunar cycle. This year, Easter is on March 31.

On the Sunday fifty days after Easter we celebrate Pentecost, the day when the Lord poured out his Spirit upon the church. Pentecost may fall as early as May 7 or as late as June 14; this year it's on May 19. The following Sunday we celebrate the Holy Trinity and our doctrine of the Triune God. After Trinity Sunday we begin the long season of the time after Pentecost, sometimes called "Ordinary Time," when we focus on the teachings of Jesus.

As Lutherans, we celebrate Martin Luther's posting of his 95 theses on Reformation Sunday, which is the last Sunday of October. The following Sunday is All Saints' Sunday (November 3 this year) when we remember our beloved saints who have gone before us. After two more Sundays in Ordinary Time, the church year concludes with Christ the King Sunday (in this graphic it's called "Reign of Christ Sunday"). And then we start a new church year again with the next Advent season, which in 2024 will begin on December 1.

To learn more about the meaning of the different liturgical colors we use during each season of the church year, click [here](#).



**Children's Christmas Pageant  
on December 17, 2023 directed  
by Aimee Castillo.**

## Upcoming Events

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

**Senior Lunch:** All Seniors 55+ are welcome to join us for lunch on Wednesday, January 3 in the fellowship hall at 12:00 PM. Join us for food and fellowship as we celebrate the New Year!

**WELCA Lunch Out:** All women of the church are welcome to join us for lunch on Wednesday, January 10 at 11:30 AM.

**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, January 17 at 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM.

**Congregational Meeting:** We will combine Sunday morning worship on January 21 for ONE service at 9:30 AM. The congregational meeting will follow, including our annual report, a presentation from the Vision Team on the new guiding statement, and approval of the 2024 budget.

### Christmas Greetings from Bishop Elizabeth Eaton



In the Gospel according to Luke we hear the angels  
say to the shepherds,



*Glory to God* IN THE  
HIGHEST HEAVEN,  
*and peace to God's people*  
ON EARTH.

At this time of the year, perhaps our longing for peace is even more acute. We know the world isn't right. Nevertheless, we wait for and trust in Jesus, the Prince of Peace. The angels proclaimed, "Peace on Earth. Good tidings we bring." We pray for peace in our world and in our communities. Every week we take time during worship to greet one another with the message of peace. We reach out, grasping hands across pews, across the aisle. Some may walk to other areas of the sanctuary to give a message of peace to a neighbor or a visitor. "The peace of Christ be with you." "And also with you." We share the peace, the love of God, and as we do, we know that God has reached from heaven to earth and, in the Prince of Peace, is sharing God's peace with us. In this season and all year round, may the peace of Christ be with you.

*Merry Christmas, dear church.*  
*Elizabeth L. Eaton*



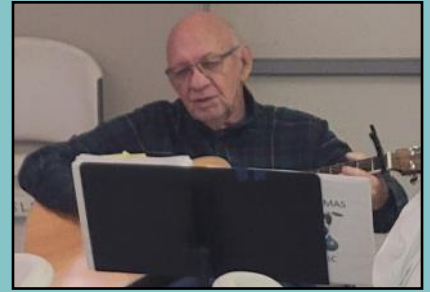
Evangelical  
Lutheran Church  
in America



## Quilters

New Life Quilters sold over 20 quilts 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 quilts 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.



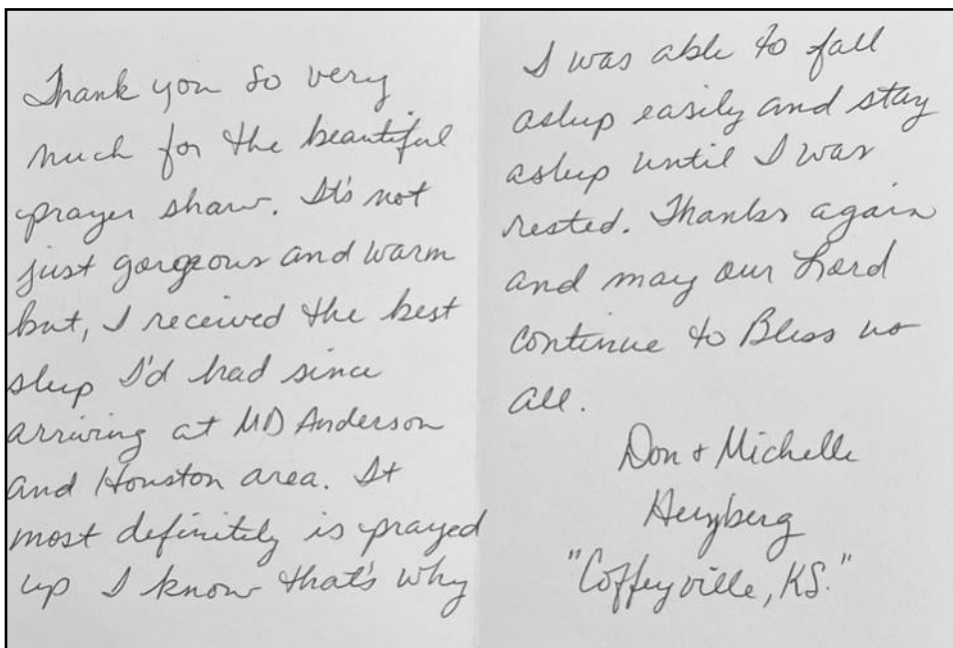
**Bubba Flowers shared Christmas songs with the quilters on December 19!**



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## Prayer Shawl Thanks from Don and Michelle Herzberg

As of December 20 a total of 788 prayer shawls have been shared by the ministry of New Life. In 2023 we shared 19 prayer shawls with people in need of care and support. We are always looking for more people who knit and crochet to join our team. Contact Julie Watkins for info.



**Church Council installation on  
December 17, 2023.**



## Thank You! From Church Council and Staff

- Karen D. for the donation of Chrismon ornaments.
- Aimee C. for organizing our BEAR toy drive.
- Jackson C. for his generous donation of his birthday toys to BEAR.
- The members of New Life for gifts and donations to the BEAR toy drive.
- The participants in the Christmas pageant.
- Aimee C. and all the adults who helped produce the pageant.
- Linda S. and her team for the children's Christmas party.
- All who donated prizes and donations for the Christmas party.
- All who helped with the sanctuary greening for Advent.
- Outgoing 2023 council members: Mary Ann M., Doug B., Vanessa R., and Lynn C.
- Doug B. and Walt W. for the property upkeep chores.
- Property team for their ongoing maintenance.
- Diane T. for changing our marquee sign.
- Doug B. for repairing our eternal candle pulley.
- WELCA party volunteers (Mary Ann M., Cheryl R., Diane T., and Julie W.) and all who participated in the celebration.
- Barbara S. and the Houston Lutheran Chorale for their Christmas concert.
- 2024 council members: Bryan B., Tamsey M., Elna R., Evelyn B., Julie W., Korie W., Cheryl R., Lisa H.W.
- 2024 Budget committee: Nancy B. and Pastor Clayton.
- All the children who helped with our Advent wreath lighting.
- All who provided food for our midweek Advent soup suppers.
- Doug B. and Charlie G. for cleaning the sanctuary carpet.
- Bob L. for his continuous donations to Christian Helping Hands for Thanksgiving and December in memory of his wife Dianne.

*We appreciate you ALL so much!*

## Financial Snapshot

Giving in Dec 2023 (through Dec 19)	= \$15,722.54 (62.1%)
Giving needed per month	= \$25,328.00
Giving January—December 2023	= \$250,041.43 (82.2%)
Giving needed January—Dec 2023	= \$303,936.00

## Sunday School Resumes on January 7

Class options at 9:15 AM include:

- Elementary Class (Kindergarten through 6th grade) – downstairs Fellowship Hall classrooms
- Confirmation Class (7th through 8th grade and parents) – conference room in office building
- High School Class (9th through 12th grade) – library in office building
- Adult Class – Fellowship Hall





## **Christian Helping Hands Food Pantry Update**

### **Judy Foucheaux**



Again this month, our church has been very generous to Christian Helping Hands. As of December 19, there has been 746 pounds of food donated to CHH. Another generous donation from Bob Leach, a Thrivent card from the Sweet family, money collected from the women at the WELCA Christmas party, and monetary donations from Tamsey and Delores have made it possible for all this food to be purchased. With the help of Lynn and Doug Barron, Robin Gottlieb, Linda and Ronnie Stavinoha, and Foster Foucheaux, this food stuff has been purchased and delivered to CHH. This also includes the food that has been donated in the grocery basket outside the Juull building. Thanks again for your generous giving.

A sad note, the husband of the president of CHH Rita Dickson passed away on November 22, 2023. There has been no update on the moving of CHH to the new building. Merry Christmas!

### **2023 Annual Report from Christian Helping Hands**

(11 months, January through November 2023)

Families helped = 8,204

People helped = 33,940

Days open = 233 days

Pounds distributed = 753,920 lbs.

Value of distribution = \$1,350,000

Pounds distributed per day = 3,236 lbs.

Donations Received in 11 Months:

Pounds of products donated = 963,743 lbs.

Value of donations = \$1,725,000

Dumped products = 28,450 lbs.

Inventory for December = 148,700 lbs.

Sources of Donations:

Area grocery stores = 17 stores (72%)

Houston Food Bank deliveries = 17%

Churches, Organizations, and Individual donations = 11%

Non-Donations – Cost to Goods = \$42,000

## 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.



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## 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

### In Memory of LaVonne Larson

Anonymous



# LUTHERHILL SUMMER

# 2024

## THE BEST. WEEK. EVER. AWAITS!

2 WEEK SESSIONS!

**JUNE 9-21**

**JR. HIGH CONNECT** *Bridges 2 Weeks of Jr. High Camps*

**LYLE 1** *Weekend Stay at Lutherhill La Grange*

**LYLE 2** *Weekend Stay at Lutherhill Galveston*

**NEW**

**JUNE 9-14**

WEEK 1

ALPHA  
YOUNGN  
YEARLING  
JR. HIGH

**JUNE 16-21**

WEEK 2

ALPHA  
YOUNGN  
YEARLING  
JR. HIGH ADVENTURE  
ONSITE DAY CAMP

**JUNE 23-28**

WEEK 3

BEACH CAMP AT  
LUTHERHILL  
GALVESTON FOR  
JR. & SR. HIGH

**JUNE 30 -  
JULY 5**

WEEK 4

FAMILY CAMP  
ONSITE DAY CAMP

**JULY 7-12**

WEEK 5

ALPHA  
YOUNGN  
YEARLING  
JR. HIGH AMAZING RACE  
SR. HIGH ADVENTURE

**JULY 21-26**

WEEK 7

ALPHA  
YOUNGN  
YEARLING  
JR. HIGH ADVENTURE  
ONSITE DAY CAMP

**JULY 28 -  
AUGUST 2**

WEEK 8

YOUNGN  
YEARLING  
JR. HIGH  
ONSITE DAY CAMP



**Register Today!**

[WWW.LUTHERHILL.ORG](http://WWW.LUTHERHILL.ORG)

ALPHA | Completed 1st or 2nd Grade (3 Night Stay)  
YOUNGN | Completed 2nd or 3rd Grade  
YEARLING | Completed 4th, 5th or 6th Grade  
JR. HIGH | Completed 6th, 7th or 8th Grade  
SR. HIGH | Completed 9th, 10th, 11th or 12th Grade  
LYLE 1 | Completed 9th or 10th Grade  
LYLE 2 | Completed LYLE 1, 10th or 11th Grade



**Open Camp Day**  
June 1st



LA GRANGE • GALVESTON

**LUTHERHILL**  
MINISTRIES

what are you waiting for?

## Meals on Wheels Update Barbara Flowers

AGAIN, thanks 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, Mary Anna Vance, 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.

I am looking forward to another great year!

### **Our next delivery date is: Jan 8-12**

I will be making my list and checking it twice in the next couple of weeks, so give me a call if you might have a couple of hours to deliver a few hot meals to some really wonderful people.

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.*

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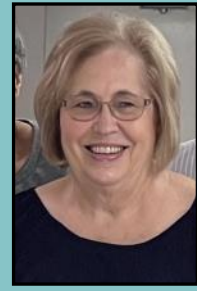
## **WELCA Christmas Party on December 10, 2023**





## Thank You from Linda Stavino

What is the saying, "it takes a village to make something happen." Well what a loving, caring village we have. The children's Christmas party would not be possible without the generous donations of toys and items from people like Lupe Almendarez, Foster Foucheaux, Brenda Pritchett, Cheryl Robinson, Charlotte Thurman, Elizabeth White, Carol Zann and many others. A big Thank You to Bob Leach for his continuous donation for seed money for the kids parties. I would also like to thank these wonderful ladies who are always there for me: Tamsey Mims, Brenda Pritchett, Deborah Richardson, Isabella Ritchey, Elna Ritter, Cheryl Robinson, Diane Tanksley, Julie Watkins, and Korie Williams. All I have to say is "could you..." or "would you..." and my wonderful team is there. A big thank you to our special guest Santa Claus and his cute Elf, Korie. Thanks everyone.





### **New Life Lutheran Church**

3521 E Orange St.

Pearland, TX 77581

Phone: (281) 485-1818

Website: [NewLifeLutheran.com](http://NewLifeLutheran.com)

Facebook: [Facebook.com/NewLifePearland](https://www.facebook.com/NewLifePearland)

### **Church Staff**

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

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

### **Church Council**

President: Bryan Bradford

Vice President: Korie Williams

Secretary: Tamsey Mims

Treasurer: Julie Watkins

At Large: Evelyn Baldauf, Lisa Hitchcock-Weber, Elna Ritter,  
Cheryl Robinson



## Thank you for your BEAR Toy Drive donations!

Aimee, Jenaro, and Max Castillo delivered all the toys we collected on December 16, 2023. The BEAR facility was filled with toys for kids of all ages. There will be thousands of children in Harris County who receive the blessing of a gift this Christmas because of your generosity. Thank you for offering love and support to the most vulnerable this year.



**BEAR provides children in Harris County in Child Protective Services with basic needs, support, and dignity.**

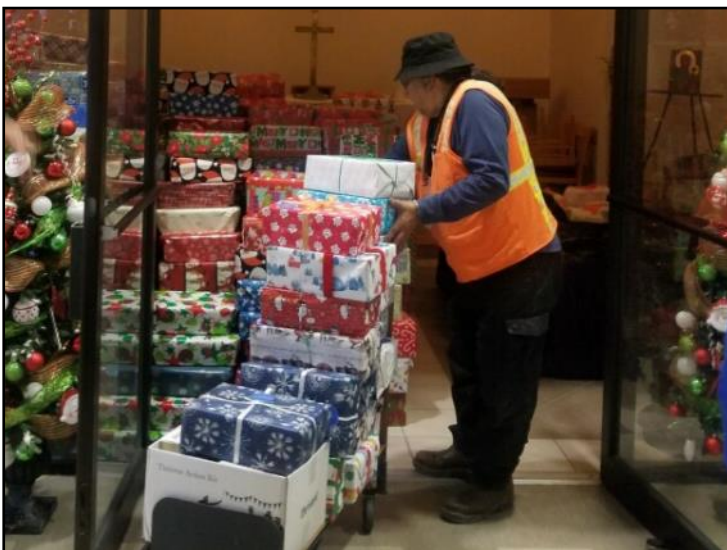


## New Life Senior Luncheon Packs Seafarer Boxes

New Life packed over 101 Christmas shoeboxes for the Seafarers out of the Port of Houston at the December Senior Luncheon.

Collections are made all year round and the New Life Seniors pack these boxes at their Luncheon in December. The wrapped shoeboxes, books, magazines, puzzles and many more bulk items are taken to the Port of Houston, International Seafarers Center during the month of December for distribution to the ships that come in to port.

Thanks to Helen, Cheryl, and Karen for delivering them to the Seafarer Center. The Center has received 5616 boxes and they have already given out over 1200 boxes this season.



# January 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<div>31</div> 9:30am - Combined Worship 12pm - Word Fellowship	<div>1</div> 6:30pm - Girls Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) @ 8pm - Al-Anon @ Sanctuary	<div>2</div> 9am - Quilters Workshop 7pm - Word Fellowship	<div>3</div> 12pm - Senior Lunch @	<div>4</div> 6pm - Property Team	<div>5</div> 6pm - WOW - Women of	<div>6</div> 10:30am - Phoenix Group 4pm - Word Fellowship
<div>7</div> 8am - Traditional Worship @ 9:15am - Sunday School 10:30am - Contemporary 12pm - Word Fellowship	<div>8</div> 6pm - Church Council 6:30pm - Girls Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) @ 8pm - Al-Anon @ Sanctuary	<div>9</div> 9am - Quilters Workshop 7pm - Word Fellowship	<div>10</div> 12pm - WELCA Lunch	<div>11</div> 10am - Pearlman Area	<div>12</div> 6pm - WOW - Women of	<div>13</div> 10:30am - Phoenix Group 4pm - Word Fellowship
<div>14</div> 8am - Traditional Worship @ 9:15am - Sunday School 10:30am - Contemporary 12pm - Word Fellowship	<div>15</div> 1pm - Stewardship Team 6:30pm - Girls Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) @ 8pm - Al-Anon @ Sanctuary	<div>16</div> 9am - Quilters Workshop 7pm - Word Fellowship	<div>17</div> 9:30am - Mary Martha Bible	<div>18</div>	<div>19</div> 6pm - WOW - Women of	<div>20</div> 10:30am - Phoenix Group 4pm - Word Fellowship
<div>21</div> 9:30am - Combined Worship 10:30am - Congregational 12pm - Word Fellowship	<div>22</div> 6:30pm - Girls Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) @ 8pm - Al-Anon @ Sanctuary	<div>23</div> 9am - Quilters Workshop 7pm - Word Fellowship	<div>24</div>	<div>25</div>	<div>26</div> 6pm - WOW - Women of	<div>27</div> 10:30am - Phoenix Group 4pm - Word Fellowship
<div>28</div> 8am - Traditional Worship @ 9:15am - Sunday School 10:30am - Contemporary 12pm - Word Fellowship	<div>29</div> 6:30pm - Girls Scouts Troop 8pm - AA Meeting (Co-Ed) @ 8pm - Al-Anon @ Sanctuary	<div>30</div> 9am - Quilters Workshop 7pm - Word Fellowship	<div>31</div>	<div>1</div> 6pm - Property Team	<div>2</div> 6pm - WOW - Women of	<div>3</div> 10:30am - Phoenix Group 4pm - Word Fellowship