

NEW HOPE NEWS



DECEMBER 2025

God's work. Our hands.

New Hope Lutheran Church
4801 Sun Valley Drive El Paso, TX
79924
Office: 915-821-2079
Email:

newhopelutheranchurchelpaso@gmail.com

Website:
Newhope915.com

10 AM - Worship

Interim Pastor: Jeff Swanson
505-850-3339

pastornewhopelutheranelpaso@gmail.com

Vicar: Thania Drake
915-799-0448
vicarthania@gmail.com

President: Vicki Gannon
Vice President: Steve Marshall



Birthdays

8 – Jeff Swanson
10 – David Santacruz
21 – Martina Jackson
29 – Geoff Gannon
30 – Ed Edwards

Anniversaries

1 – Maria & Ron Tollette
29 – Jessica & Larry Tarin

CHURCH CALENDAR

December 2025

Blessing Corner: Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
	01	02	03	04	05	06
			Crochet Group 1pm	Ladie's Night Out 5:00pm		Katie's Pantry 9am – until food runs out
07	08	09	10	11	12	13
Sunday School 9:15am Worship 10am Congregational Meeting 11:05am Thank You Lunch 11:30am Pastor Jeff Swanson		Dove Circle Christmas Party 12pm	Crochet Group 1pm	Finance Meeting 9am		Katie's Pantry 9am – until food runs out
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
Sunday School 9:15am Worship 10am Fellowship 11am Christmas Tree Decorating 11am Council Meeting 11:15am Gifts and Food Due for Cristo Rey Vicar Thania Drake			Crochet Group 1pm			Katie's Pantry 9am – until food runs out Door Hanging 10am -12pm
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Sunday School 9:15am Worship 10am Fellowship 11am Pastor Mike Hamilton			Christmas Eve Service 4pm 			Katie's Pantry 9am – until food runs out
28	29	30	31			
Sunday School 9:15am Worship 10am Fellowship 11am Birthday Cake Sunday Pastor Jeff Swanson						

The Beautiful Meaning of Advent

The Advent Season is a four-week period before Christmas that celebrates the anticipation and coming of Jesus Christ. Each Sunday in Advent has a specific focus. The purpose of each focus is to spend time reflecting on the true meaning of the season. Advent candles are lit each Sunday.

The first candle symbolizes **peace** and is known as the “Angel’s Candle”. The angels announced that Jesus came to bring peace – He came to bring people close to God and to each other again.

The second candle symbolizes **hope** and is called the “Prophecy Candle”. The prophets of the Old Testament, especially Isaiah waited in hope for the Messiah’s arrival.

The third candle symbolizes **joy** and is called the “Shepherd’s Candle” To the shepherd’s great joy, the angels announced that Jesus came for humble, unimportant people like them. This candle is meant to remind us of the joy that the world experienced at the birth of Jesus.

The fourth candle symbolizes **faith** or the “Bethlehem Candle” reminding us of Mary and Joseph’s journey to Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus.



New Hope News

Salvation Essay #7. 1 December 2025. A Brief Essay; "Persecutions! Why?"
By Jeff Swanson, Interim Pastor at New Hope Lutheran Church, El Paso Texas

Via Essay #6, I briefly described what happened to move the first century Christian movement out of the Hebrew lands and into the wider Roman Empire. Christians were forced out, largely by rejection, civil war and the year 70 AD Roman invasion; violence.

At first small numbers of Christians were welcomed in their new homes. Then trouble began.

The Roman lands had well developed and established temples. The people could choose which temples to visit and belong. These were named after a "pantheon" of Roman and Greek gods and goddesses. Pantheon means "**ALL**" gods and goddesses". Stories were told about the behavior of the deities. Most presented some practical lessons for living. Mars was the God of war. Zeus was the god of the sky, weather, lightening, law and order. Juno was the female goddess of marriage, childbirth, and family protection. My favorite is Janus who has two identical and opposite faces. Janus looks to the past for lessons learned and forward to plan the future. Our month of January is named after Janus.

Belonging to a temple usually brought people a salvation message of eternal life via the temple deities. And there were immediate benefits. Since there was no refrigeration, temple members could pool money and buy a fresh butchered cow. Everyone could have meat (protein) for an evening for two per week. Then boil the bones and carcass for soup. There were deals made between temple leaders to secure employment for carpenters and other workers. Parents could meet other parents and ensure trustworthy connections for their children and potential marriage partners. Temple membership had ethical behavior standards; thus people knew each other for accountability.

BUT—there was a temple price. Money. Labor. Expensive offerings were required for temple upkeep, operations, and management. Manager salaries.

Christians came along, offered inexpensive house church experiences, to share food and personal connections. Authentic following of Jesus required high ethical standards and accountability. And eternal life salvation was presented as a free, gracious, unmerited gift of God. Current sins were forgiven. Women had a voice in all faith business and were considered precious...not mere subservient commodities. In some Christian experiences, groups tried silencing women from teaching men, but quickly abandoned that inconsistency with Jesus' ethics. Everyone was precious. Jesus was the focal point. There may be a "cross" icon, candles, Holy Communion vessels, but there were no huge, expensive, temples to sustain.

THUS — Christianity was presented as a "Free" and saving gift of God. Free from temple taxes and free from earning salvation.

SO— Temple participation and revenues went down. And many Roman citizens associated and benefiting from temple operations got mad. Very angry! WOW mad!

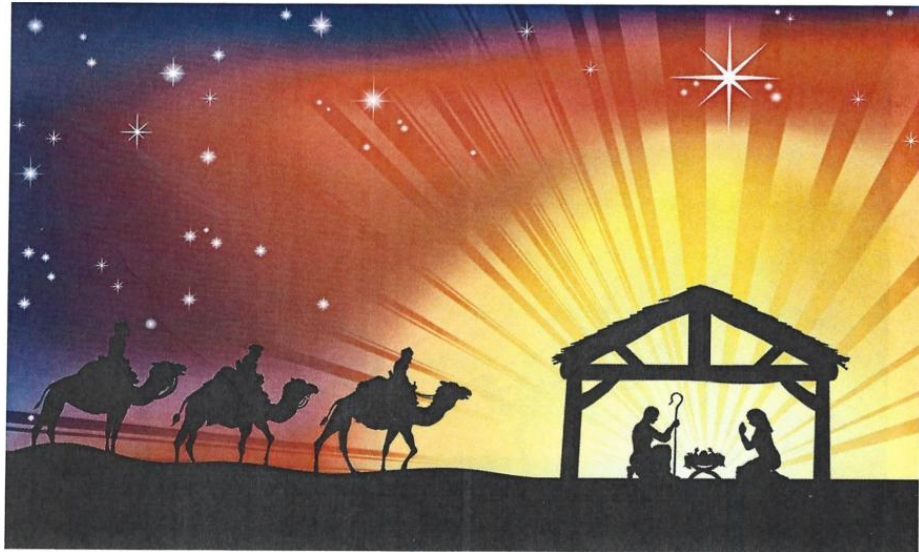
Political leaders received complaints blaming Christians for social woes. Shrewd and nasty political leaders drew attention away from their own incompetencies, failures, and bad behaviors by focusing social blame and attention upon the growing Christian population.

Consequence: Persecutions!! Christian beliefs about salvation now and eternally were tested. Prisons, killing for public sport in arenas, confiscation of property, rejection, and worse, eventually collapsed. God's message of salvation now and eternally eventually prevailed.

Next: factors and events...through which Christians were sustained by God in perilous times.

You are invited to the Christmas Posadas of Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey

We are Planning our Biggest Christmas Celebration for our Community "The Posadas"
People come to reenact the journey of Mary and Joseph and later celebrate with
Mariachis, the traditional Mexican Christmas meal, the Pifiata for the kids and more.



Sunday, December 14th @ 5:00 p.m.

Las Posadas will begin with the Christmas Service at
St Timothy's Lutheran Church

1 1050 Montwood Dr, El Paso, TX 79936

The meal, Mariachis, Piöata, and celebration will be at 6:45 p.m.

\$10 per person or \$20 per family

Free for people who volunteer for this event!

Please let as know if you are coming by texting 915-704-6185 or

Pastor Juan De Dios @ 915-305-1185

iPlease reserve your ticket soon!

New Hope News

Advent into Christmas Worship News:



Here we are in advent! Every Sunday we "wait" and "expect" the retelling of the story of the birth of Jesus. Each week as we light the next candle on the advent wreath we will hear a prayer written by a young adult Lutheran Christian in Palestine today, prayers for peace where we live and throughout the world. We will sing the songs of the season and then gather on Dec 24th at 4pm to remember the birth of Jesus and still have time to make it to a Christmas Eve dinner or party! Please invite a friend and bring them along. Dec 28th will be a service of lessons and carols. We're also hoping you can help decorate the Christmas trees on Sunday the 14th right after worship!



Join us for Thank You Lunch

Lunch Provided by El Buen Pastor

Date: Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025

Time: 11:30am

New Hope Lutheran Church

Office/Classroom Building

Sign up for fun, fellowship

And good food



Mark your Calendars

Ladie's Night Out – Thursday, December 4 at 5:30pm

* The annual congregational meeting will be held after the church service at 11:00 on Sunday, December 7 to elect council members and vote on the 2026 Budget. **Wear your favorite Christmas sweater to church.**

Thank You Lunch provided by El Buen Pastor on Sunday, December 7 at 11:30am. Sign up and come and enjoy the delicious food and fellowship.

Christmas Eve Service, December 24 at 4:00pm





*Enjoy the Sights and Sounds of
Christmas!*

Christmas Eve Festival

December 24th

Candle Light Service 4:00pm

New Hope Lutheran Church

4801 Sun Valley

915-821-2079

We seek in every way to be at peace with one another, to go the extra mile. We seek to be patient, kind, and gentle knowing that our Lord has dealt with us tenderly. Having been forgiven, we are quick to forgive and slow to anger. This is the Christian life, and it is the life of Christ, for our sake.

New Hope is open, and we joyfully and safely gather in person for worship every Sunday at 10am. Let us continue to share God's love. Face Coverings are now optional. All are welcome to receive Communion.



Pastors and lay people who will be presiding and preaching in DECEMBER:

December 7- Pastor Jeff Swanson, Interim Pastor

December 14 - Vicar Thania Drake

December 21 – Pastor Mike Hamilton, Retired ELCA Pastor

December 24 - Pastor Jeff Swanson, Interim Pastor (Christmas Eve)

December 28 – Pastor Jeff Swanson, Interim Pastor

Here are some ways for you to be a part of the worship service

1. Attend in person - all safety precautions will be in place (wear a mask, practice physical distancing, and hand sanitizer is available)
2. If you do not feel comfortable coming into the building, you can listen to the service on the radio in your car in the church parking lot. Virtual Services - begin broadcasting the service between 10:00 and 10:15 on channel FM 90.1
3. Watch the service on YouTube.

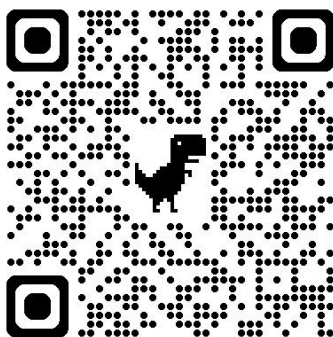
NEW HOPE UPDATES

New Hope's expenses continue during this time. Please do not forget your offerings. We are grateful for all who send their offerings to New Hope. Thank you for your faithful commitment and your financial support to New Hope. It is very much appreciated and New Hope is truly blessed.

Here are some ways to send your offerings to New Hope:

1. Mail your offering to new Hope to 4801 Sun Valley El Paso, TX 79924
2. Place your offering in an envelope, marked Financial Secretary and drop it in the mail slot in the back of the Office/Classroom Building
3. Use bill pay through your bank and your bank will mail a check to New Hope
4. Use Thrivent Choice through Thrivent.com. Click on personal donation, select New Hope Lutheran Church El Paso, Texas and then follow the prompts.
5. Place your gift in the offering plates
6. Online giving available via our website: newhope915.com

Giving QR Code



Please keep everyone in your prayers. Check on church members, elderly, friends, neighbors and family. Take care of yourself and others.

New Hope News

New Hope QR Code



2025 BLESSING CALENDAR

January – ELCA Good Gifts/ELCA World Hunger

February – Soup-er Bowl Sunday

March – Opportunity Center

April – Bunnies, Beanies & Blankets – (UMC Children's Hospital)

May – La Posada Home – Domestic Violence Shelter

June – Borderland Rainbow Center – With Peace Lutheran El Paso

July – Christmas in July (Operation Santa Claus) and Blessing of the Backpacks – School Supplies

August – Church Supplies (Replenish New Hope's Paper Products)

September – God's Work, our Hands – (Schaeffer Halfway House)

October – Blessing of the Animals (Mandarin's Retreat)

November & December – Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey

These blessing corners will be funded through New Hope and Thrivent Action Team.

If you have a Thrivent product you likely qualify to sponsor an Action Team. If you need help setting up a project or need ideas about what to do or simply want to delegate the task to someone else, we can help you accomplish that end.

Blessings
COUNT THEM ONE BY ONE

New Hope News



Angel Tree For Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey After School Program

Our blessing corner for November 16 through December 14 will again be the angel tree and food baskets for Iglesia Luterana Cristo Rey. Angel cards representing the children in the after school program and their siblings are on the tree, as well as baskets suggesting items for the food baskets. There is a list of all the items suggested for the food baskets in case you would like to contribute an entire basket.

Please sign on the clipboard for the angels you have chosen.

You may give toys and/or clothing. Ages and sizes are listed on the back of the angel card.

(The number by the child's name is not the child's age. It is a reference number to help sort the gifts by family).

When known, the children are grouped by families. You may choose the whole family or just one or two children.

Gifts should be wrapped or in gift bags. Please use the angel card for the name tag. Please bring gifts to New Hope Angel Tree by Sunday, December 14.

TRANSPORTATION

Help with Transportation To Doctor's Appointment



For those who find yourself looking ahead, wondering how you are going to get to your next doctor's appointment, etc., take heart!! New Hope now has a Transportation Committee that will do cartwheels to get you to your appointment.

Looking for someone who would be interested in being the new Transportation Coordinator. To be able to coordinate different people to drive people to their next doctor's appointment, to the store, or other places people would need to go.

Thanks to Kathy Hamblen for her dedication for many years of coordinating the transportation for people in the church

Please give 1-2 week notice to plan arrangements.

VIRTUAL SERVICES

WE ARE ON THE AIR

Each Sunday between 10:00 and 10:15 we will begin broadcasting service on 90.1 fm. If you would like to come to the parking lot or live within 1 mile of the Church you should be able to pick up our signal.





We have made some significant updates and upgrades to our systems, and we are now STREAMING LIVE once again every Sunday

Service videos will no longer be uploaded as individual files as the live recording will be available. So be sure to subscribe and turn on notifications so that you will receive the email that we are broadcasting.

Having trouble finding them:

On our YouTube home page look under PAST LIVE STREAMS or also under the VIDEOS tab and you will find all our content Remember to hit subscribe and set the notifications so that you know when we are LIVE or posted new content.

THRIVENT

Thrivent Choice "Make a Personal Donation" Maybe you have heard it said many times "follow the prompts" to make a personal donation and have no clue what that actually means or how it works! So here's a little cheat sheet, I did some exploring to figure it out.

First of all, you don't have to be a Thrivent member to use this feature.

Second, it's a way to give via your credit card and rack up more points or miles and the organization (New Hope or someplace else) will get a record of your personal donation and should track that gift for you in the same way as if you had put a check in an envelope, it should be recorded by them for you

Third of all this is DIFFERENT than designating Thrivent Choice dollars for those of you who are Thrivent members

Fourth, it's not so easy as just having a link which is specific to New Hope, maybe we will do that in time, for now below is a cheat sheet to help you if you want to use the Thrivent choice personal donation system

1. go to thrivent.com
2. search box type in "thrivent choice"
3. once in thrivent choice click on "make a personal donation"
4. follow remaining prompts which are self explanatory

NEWS AND EVENTS

We Are On YOUTUBE!
Search

NEW HOPE ELCA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S2HMKg3D3LU>

Click on the ELCA Logo

And be sure to subscribe!

Subscribe to our
You Tube Channel

Flowers

Please see the flower calendar in the back of the sanctuary. Flower Dates are still open.



Are you getting the
message?

We are committed to improving our communications and congregational messaging. If you are not getting the message, let Karen Miller know and we will get you added to the email distribution list so that you do not miss out on upcoming events.



NEWS & EVENTS

MEMORIAL PLAQUES

To order a memorial plaque for the memorial wall, please see Karen Miller.



**JOIN US
On
90.1 FM**



RONALD McDONALD HOUSE

New Hope collects aluminum tabs to be donated to the Ronald McDonald House.

OPPORTUNITIES TO SUPPORT



THRIVENT CHOICE

The member advised charitable grant program from Thrivent Financial. Eligible benefit members are designated Choice Dollars that they can direct to help make a difference for New Hope

THRIVENT ACTION TEAMS

Apply to lead your volunteer team in a onetime fundraiser, service activity, or educational event to support an unmet need in our community and how you can help.



OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW

OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW

New Hope has several places in which you can come together to grow in community as we study the word together, as we share conversation, and as we discover God's presence in our lives. All we need is you to join in the discussion when your schedule permits. The spirit is at work among us as we grow in relationship with each other. All of these opportunities are open to all members, guests and friends of New Hope.



DOVE CIRCLE (Women's Bible Study)

An Invitation for all women of New Hope and friends to join in Bible Study and Fellowship every 2nd Tuesday of the month. Meetings are held at New Hope in the Office/Classroom building.

"The Gather" magazine is used for the Bible Study, led by women of the Dove Circle. The Dove Circle sponsors events, such as the spring and fall rummage sales and craft fair and other events as needed.

Schedule for 2025

January - July

August - December

Christmas Luncheon – December 9, 12pm
Thania Drake's Home



OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP

OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP

New Hope has several ways in which you we come together to help others and our community. As we conduct our daily lives think of those that will be aided by your participation.



KATIE'S FOOD PANTRY

Katie's Food Pantry distributes food to our neighbors every Saturday, 9am – until food runs out. Always looking for volunteers to help. See Maria Anez or Pastor Jeff if you are interested in helping. Items needed are bottled water, Gatorade, plastic grocery bags (new or used), garbage bags (33 gal or larger)



JUST FOR FUN

Christmas Word Search

G Q C E L V E S Z L I G H T S
D C Z L F J S R V N U L B Z B
C E L E B R A T E W M J E Y F
Q F D C W G N R E I N D E E R
P F Z E H J T G C O O K I E S
G R A N C R A I R I W B I H C
O M E M N O I U K S F V A Z A
R I I S I N R S N D O H J D N
N M M S E L E A T E C Q B W D
A G Z D T N Y C T M J C P R Y
M I I I U L T T W I A B T E C
E V H N Z W E S S Q O S B A A
N I E N A Q Q T F T P N J T N
T N G E P Q I C O P Y Z S H E
D G A R J W D E Q E Y P E B S

Decorations
Celebrate
Lights
Giving

Candy Canes
Ornament
Presents
Dinner

Christmas
Reindeer
Family
Wreath

Mistletoe
Cookies
Elves
Santa



Peace
be with
you