



Building Congregational Vitality

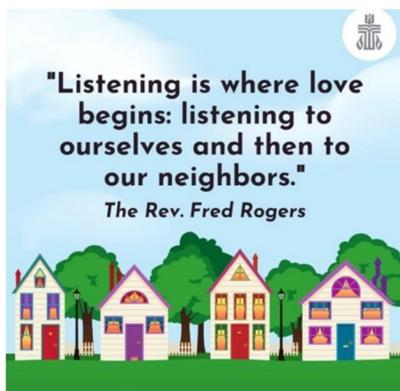
By Debra Caldwell

Thank you for participating in a Focus Group!



Members of New Hope felt their relationship to God grow in many ways through ministry, fellowship, day care, VBS, choir, Stephen's Ministry, Hope Impacts, and other events that served the community. A strong theme that emerged was the importance of being a congregation with a "big heart" which can refer both to relationships within the congregation and making each person feel welcomed and being a church that helps its neighbors.

There is genuine curiosity about the needs of future neighbors and how New Hope can connect to them. Some were at a loss about how to grow relationships. Most thoughts about the future were centered on a new property.



Our next Strategic Planning Cohort meeting with LEADS Connect and John Knox Presbyterian will be April 12. In April, our committee will finalize plans for New Hope members to listen to our physical and virtual neighbors. We will have many opportunities to engage with the community from May through July.

You can learn more about [Leadconnects](#) by visiting their website or read the article about their work in the Presbytery newsletter [HERE](#). It highlights Jessica Noonan, our facilitator, who is helping New Hope enter into intentional discernment through prayer, scripture and listening to the Holy Spirit.

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Birthdays, Anniversaries, Calendar, Coming Events

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR by Cindy Mood



Good Friday Worship

Join us on Friday, April 18th at noon for our solemn Good Friday service as we gather to remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross. This meaningful midday service provides space for quiet reflection and contemplation of the crucifixion through Scripture readings, prayer, and sacred music. The service timing allows those working nearby to step away during their lunch hour for this important observance.

Through the power of word and music, we will journey with Jesus through his final hours, deepening our understanding of his ultimate sacrifice and what it means for our lives today. The service will be appropriately brief while maintaining the gravity and significance of this holy day. All are welcome to join us as we mark this pivotal moment in our faith.

GroupMe Discussion Groups

Digital Lenten Discussion Groups were a unique new way to connect and dig into Scripture together. The two running groups have had so many insightful thoughts and questions. We will be starting another digital discussion group soon. Please let Pastor Cindy know if there are any topics you might be interested in discussing!

Radical Hospitality: Making Welcome an Action, Not Just a Thought

Dear New Hope Family,

A couple Wednesdays ago, I attended a presentation on “Radical Hospitality” at Memorial Drive United Methodist Church. Shane Claiborne, writer, activist and speaker, spoke about how hospitality is “lived out” in his community and how we can better reflect Christ’s love when we take Jesus’ words seriously. He is passionate about engaging with Scripture as a guide for engaging with the world. It was a great presentation and a good reminder that hospitality isn’t merely a nice addition to our faith—it’s at the very heart of the gospel. When Jesus said, “I was a stranger and you welcomed me” (Matthew 25:35), He wasn’t suggesting hospitality as an option but revealing it as a profound way we encounter Him.

WHY RADICAL HOSPITALITY MATTERS

In our world today, people hunger for genuine connection. Think about this: even retail stores have systems ensuring no customer leaves without being acknowledged and contacted later. Yet how often do visitors come through our church doors, worship alongside us, and leave without a meaningful connection?

Scripture repeatedly emphasizes hospitality’s importance. Abraham welcomed three strangers and entertained angels (Hebrews 13:2). The early church was known for breaking bread together with “glad and generous hearts” (Acts 2:46). Romans 12:13 explicitly instructs us to “extend hospitality to strangers.”

FROM PASSIVE THOUGHTS TO ACTIVE WELCOME

Hospitality isn’t just a warm feeling—it’s intentional action. Here are ways each of us can practice radical hospitality:

NEW HOPE NEWS

THE POWER OF QUESTIONS

Remember that genuine hospitality begins with curiosity about others. Ask more questions than you answer! When meeting someone new:

"What brought you to New Hope today?"

"What are you hoping to find in a church community?"

"What's your story? I'd love to hear about your journey."

By listening more than speaking, we show guests they matter. We are truly better together, and that starts with knowing who our guests really are.

CONNECTION CARDS ARE EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Don't assume someone else will collect contact information. It's better for multiple people to ask than no one at all! The connection cards are available on the tables in our worship space—make it your personal mission to ensure every guest completes one before leaving. A simple "We'd love to stay in touch—have you filled out a connection card?" can make all the difference.

BEYOND SUNDAY MORNING

Invite guests to stay for fellowship after worship. Better yet, extend an invitation to join you for lunch! Remember how difficult it can be to visit a new church (or step into someone's home). Think about why you returned to New Hope for a second visit—it was likely the meaningful connections you made.

WE'RE ALL MINISTERS OF WELCOME

As your pastor, I can greet and welcome people at the door, but I can't create a culture of hospitality alone. It takes our entire congregation to make New Hope the warm, welcoming community God calls us to be.

Think about it: If we aren't expecting guests, we aren't growing. And how can we share God's love if people don't come back? Each time a visitor walks through our doors, we have a precious opportunity to demonstrate Christ's love that might not come again.

NEW HOPE NEWS

MAKING IT PRACTICAL THIS MONTH

This month, I challenge each member to:

- Learn the name of one new person each Sunday
- Ask at least three questions before sharing about yourself
- Personally invite a visitor to fill out a connection card
- Extend an invitation to coffee hour or a meal

Remember what made you feel welcome when you were new. Was it someone remembering your name? An invitation to join a group? A follow-up call? Let's offer that same gift of belonging to everyone who visits.

Let's transform New Hope into a place where no one remains a stranger for long—where welcome isn't just a banner on our wall but evident in our every action.

In Christ's welcoming love,

Pastor Cindy Mood



[This Photo](#) by Un-

Worship News

Iris Hymel, Worship Elder

We have entered the season of Lent, the time of year when we begin preparing for the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior.

Sunflowers have once again been added to the table to remind us to pray for the people of Ukraine as they struggle through the devastation of war.

Palm Sunday is approaching quickly. At the Palm Sunday service, we will distribute palms to everyone attending with extras if you would like to bring one to a family member or a friend; however, the palms will be slightly different this year. (Shhh—it's a surprise.)

Easter is approaching and we will celebrate Jesus at New Hope. Terry Owens constructed a cross and encased it in chicken wire for us to display flowers as we have done for many years on Easter Sunday. Many thanks to Terry for building this for New Hope. We will be able to use it for many years to come.



PLEASE REMEMBER TO BRING FLOWERS
ON EASTER SUNDAY.

We have made a change to the way we collect our offerings. Instead of passing the plate, we now have the plate near the sign-in sheet. We hope this is easier for you. We are also bringing back the children's liturgy and asking for volunteers to reach out to the children present or to the child in each of us. If you are interested in presenting a brief explanation of the day's scripture reading, please speak to Rev. Cindy. She is looking forward to starting this program. She had no idea we had done this in the years past and was excited as I recanted some memories with the children and the leader. Thank you, Rev. Cindy, for always being so tuned in to New Hope.

Debra Caldwell announced that she is moving. She will stay on Session to complete her term. New Hope thanks her for this and for her years of service. I know in my heart that I can speak for everyone when I say that Debra and her family will be missed. We wish you, Steve, and your family the best as you begin a new chapter in your lives.

Luncheon

HAPPY FEBRUARY!

From: Congregational Life



Hello. This is Jill Giles, Jennye Giles & Wendy Petit, your Congregational Life Committee. We wish you a prayerful Lenten Season. Here's the CL news:

Hospitality: The April/May sign-up for concessions is on the piano.

Special Events: Join us on April 13 for the Palm Sunday Luncheon at Lozano's. The website is <https://lozanosmexicanrestaurant.com/>. You can find the directions and the menu. Invite a friend!

Meal Train: Do you know someone that could use a homemade meal delivered to their residence? Please text or email. Thank you.

Congregational Care: Birthdays: Andrew Bettes, 4/03, Kathy Cole, 4/03, Julia Nugent 4/04, Janet Rainey, 4/10, Cindy Mood 4/27, Ruth Nicoletti, 4/29 **Anniversaries:** Terry & Linda Owens, 4/06 Dave & Helen Galer 4/10, Robert and Lavita Golightly, 4/13, Jerry & Wendy Petit 4/24, David & Janet Rainey, 4/24, Laura & David Mann 4/30. It is also the Anniversary of Cindy Moods Ordination on 4/27. Lots of lasting love to celebrate this month.

Calling and Visiting: Thank you, church family, for calling our members in need. Julie Nugent is doing well, but in pain. We were delighted to see Charleen Chatham at worship. We continue to keep Cliff in our prayers. We pray for the health of our congregation. We offer a prayer of thanksgiving for Wendy's wonderful sermons and the hospitality of the Owen's as we continue worship in their home.

Transportation: We are currently providing transportation for the Atria residents. Thank you, Iris for driving our PW women into H-town for the gathering.

Member Projects: Spread the good news this Lenten season. Grab a bag of eggs (if you have not done so already). Inside the eggs are invitations to Easter Service with New Hope and a small treat.

To volunteer to serve on the committee, receive care or request care, please call Jill Giles: (240)374-9422 or email at Jill4nia@gmail.com.



MISSION AND OUTREACH

By Debra Caldwell

On April 6, the Donor Coach will be in the driveway of the Owens home from 8:30 am– 1pm. Every blood donation will save three lives! If you or someone you know is willing to give, please sign up online or contact Terry at terryowens@consolidated.net to sign up.

**NEW HOPE
BLOOD
DRIVE**

Sunday, April 6
8:30 AM - 1 PM

Sign up with Terry Owens



Katy Christian Ministries has several programs that need volunteers. Participation in one or more would be a great way for New Hope members to give back to the community and to listen to our neighbors! Volunteers are needed for several programs.

There's something for people with different levels of ability, interest, and time. Click [HERE](#) for more information.



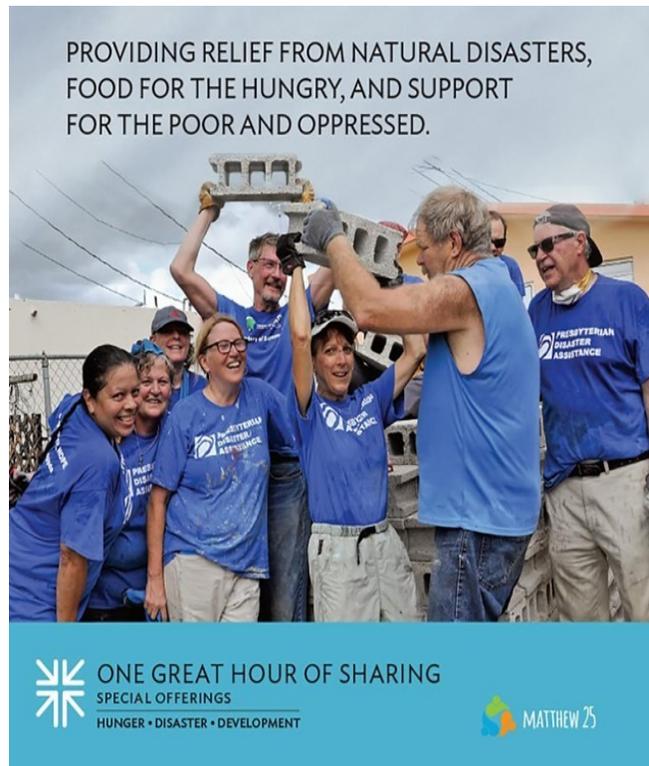


The New Hope Garden club will meet at Katy Branch Library at 6 PM on April 15. Harris County Master Gardener, Chevvy Tang, will give a presentation on Native Plants followed by our business meeting.

One Great Hour of Sharing

March 5-April 20, 2025

Your gift will “support efforts to relieve hunger through the Presbyterian Hunger Program, promote development through the Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People, and assist in areas of disaster through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. All three programs work in different ways to serve individuals and communities in need. From the initial disaster response to ongoing community development, their work fits together to provide people with safety, sustenance, and hope.”





YOUR SESSION AT WORK

Linda Owens, Clerk to Session

Session met on March 23, 2025, and we voted to:

approve the purchase of a cloud based database/payroll/financial software package for \$2400.00 a year.

approve the hiring of a bookkeeper to do financial transactions.

And celebrated the:

return of the flower cross for Easter Sunday

Jill Giles having set up an after worship at Lorenzo's on Palm Sunday.

an upcoming blood drive on April 6, 2025.

The session appreciates your continued prayers as we work to find a new place to worship.

