



New Life Christian Community

Join Us As We Celebrate
Only Jesus

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." 2 Cor 5:17

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 2026
VOL. 19, ISSUE 34

Pastoral Pondering

Numbers 6

Over the course of the last several weeks, my family and I have been reading through the book of Numbers (with our church – M'Cheyne's – reading plan). Despite what you might think, it's filled with exciting stories, and it continually proclaims the grace of God. Grab your Bible and turn to Numbers chapter 6 for a clear example.

In Numbers 6 we are taught about the requirements of the Nazirite vow. What is a Nazirite vow? Allow me to back up for a moment and set the stage. In the Old Testament, under the Old Covenant, the priests (descendants of the tribe of Levi) were considered **"separated to the Lord."** They were, in a sense, a special class of people. That left the rest of the people of Israel – perhaps feeling left out. Thus, if you were not a priest - but still wanted to separate yourself to the Lord or dedicate yourself to the Lord, you could take the Nazirite vow – which was meant to illustrate to God and all those around you – that, though you may not be a priest, you were still separated to the Lord (**Numbers 6:2,3,5,12.**)

Under this separation, you would be required to live under a strict set of the following guidelines: First, to take this vow you would separate yourself **"from wine and strong drink"** (6:3.) Anything produced from the **"fruit of the vine"** was prohibited (6:4.) This would make normal life very difficult. In the ancient world water was often contaminated (this is still an issue in many Third World countries), and so the normal and safest drink was liquid from the fruit of the vine. The one under the Nazirite vow was not allowed to have the *normal* drink. To use a modern example, this would be like someone, today, refraining from water! Imagine going to a restaurant and asking the waiter, "Excuse me, has water been used in the preparation of the soup?"

The second requirement was, **"no razor shall touch his head"** (6:5.) The one who took the vow was not allowed to cut his hair. Their long hair (all of it, mind you) would cause them to look unkempt and certainly separate them from normal life.

Lastly, and most difficult of all, the vow required that **"he shall not go near a dead body"** (6:6) – even in the hardest of circumstances – the death of a close loved one (6:7.) If a father or mother was close to death, he'd be required to keep his distance – in case his loved one die **"suddenly"** (6:9.) This vow separated this person from every aspect of normal life.

Imagine how just learning about this vow would make you feel if you were an Israelite. Biblically, we know of only three individuals who took this vow (Samuel, Samson, and John the Baptist). Other than these three, if we were among Israel, you and I would likely realize that we could not take such an extreme vow. And so, the reality would sink in: 'I am neither a priest, nor am I able to take the vow of the Nazirite.' The combination of this reality would be a great discouragement. You'd be left with the impression that you are not good enough or devout enough to be close to God.

Perhaps this is you. You've looked at others and thought – they are closer to the Lord than you could ever be. Maybe you felt that there was no hope for you.

If this is you, finish reading Numbers 6.

At the end of this long chapter about the Nazirite vow there are a few short verses that seem to come out of nowhere. But the placement of these verses is intentional by God.

Immediately following the vow, God commands Aaron (Israel's High Priest) to **"bless the people"** (6:23.) He commands these words be proclaimed over every person in the community:

"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to

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Pastoral Pondering

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you; the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace" (6:24-26.)

God breaks into our troubled hearts and declares, through His High Priest, that **"He will bless" us (6:27.)**

This blessing may look entirely out of place - but such is the nature of grace. The point is this: God is gracious and without His grace, our own efforts will never suffice. We need God's grace. By His grace, He declares that He is pleased. This blessing at the end of Numbers 6 describes God's attitude as though He were smiling over His people. He is pleased. When we are under the ministry of the Lord's High Priest, we have peace with God.

You don't need to prove yourself to the Lord. That's the role of our High Priest.

And here is the most important detail for us – none of us are living under Aaron's priesthood. Instead, we live under the great and perfect High Priest, Jesus Christ. Thus, *if* Jesus is your High Priest, these words (from **Numbers 6:22-27**) describe the grace of God that has been given to us in Jesus Christ.

Under His ministry (but only under *His* ministry) – we are blessed by the Lord. In Him we have peace with God.

Allow Christ to reign as your High Priest – and stop trying to please the Lord on your own. Stop striving and receive His blessing.

In Christ,
Pastor Tony



welcome

If you are a visitor this morning or have only been coming to New Life for a few months, we are glad you are joining with us! If you would like to learn more about New Life, be sure to stop by the Resource Center in the front foyer to pick up a welcome bag we have for you. Please join us for fellowship *and a meal* after service today where we would love to meet and get to know you and for you to get to know us more.



If you haven't visited the Resource Center lately, Come check it out! Our shelves hold so many great books to help you grow in your knowledge of and love for God and to help guide you in your daily walk with Him. Perhaps you'll find a book to read with a friend or form a book group with! We also have many great resources that you may want to consider for your gift-giving needs for the young or old and all ages in-between. Come check us out after service today.

MINISTRY DIRECTORY

Building & Grounds Ministry

Jim Judkins 715.338.8837
oldoutboardjim@hotmail.com

Coffee Ministry

Ana Smith: 715.566.3740
ajoysmith05@gmail.com

Finance Administration

Colleen Firkus (Treasurer): 612.889.7581
financeministry@newlifechristiancomm
unity.org

Greeting Card Ministry

Lynn Nelson: 651.373.1426
lynnjimmnelson@gmail.com

GriefShare Ministry

Robin Mattson: 715.566.1945
robinmattson27@gmail.com

Immerse Ministry

Paul Linzmeier: 320.226.5581
pastorpaul.nlcc@gmail.com

Meal Train Relief Ministry

Kristin Stephan: 651.235.1681
kristin@kageinnovation.com

Missions Outreach

Ben Wilson 651-497-7136
benwilson246@gmail.com

Music Ministry

Jeff Warren: 715.553.2405
pastorjeff.nlcc@protonmail.com

Newsletter Administration

Dawn Holm: 715.472.8453
djhalm@lakeland.ws

Resource Center

Cory Mattson: 715.417.0945
cory79mattson@hotmail.com

Sunday Meal Services

Barbara Judkins: 309.269.0556
bjdarnell@hotmail.com

Video Ministry

Jim Mabee: 651.470.4172
jmabee@centurytel.net

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastoral Eldership Team:

Pastor Tony Minell	715.417.1982
galatiansiizo@yahoo.com	
Pastor Paul Linzmeier	320.226.5581
pastorpaul.nlcc@gmail.com	
Pastor Jeff Warren	715.553.2405
pastorjeff.nlcc@protonmail.com	
Cory Mattson – Secretary	715.417.0945
Todd Asmus	612.695.4849
Zachary Fugate	715.379.2918
Brian Gates	651.230.6554
Dale Mattson	715.566.2302
Greg Mattson	715.417.2444
Rene Milner	715.557.0185
Jim Nelson	651.283.2132
Jay Swisher	763.587.3472
Sam Umlauf	612.791.2132

This Week's Scheduled Events:

Sun	Preaching Guild– 6:30 pm
Thurs	Men's Bible Study– 6:30 am
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study– 10:30 am
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study– Noon
Thurs	GriefShare– 6:30 pm
Thurs	Ladies Bible Study– On Break
Thurs	Men's Bible Study– 6:30 pm

May Memory Verse:

John 6:35 (ESV)

"Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

May Fellowship Tip:

Looking to be more connected online? If you haven't already, download our NewLife App to access our online messaging platform. Get church updates, announcements, prayer requests, and more. Make an account today and get connected.

Sunday Meals and Fellowship:

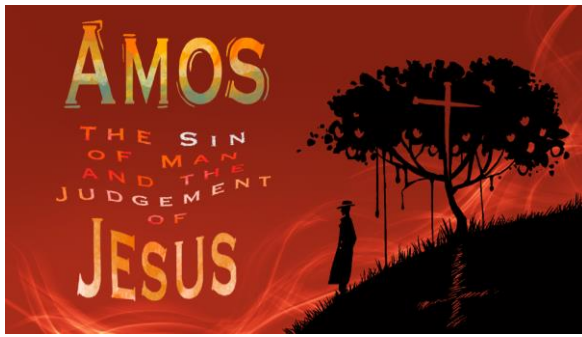
May 24 Meal Team 4~Beans & Rice
May 31 Meal Team 5~Breakfast

Contact Barbara Judkins if interested in being on a meal team or a helper.

This Sunday's Worship Songs:

1. Only A Holy God
2. All Creatures of Our God and King
3. His Glory and My Good
4. Help Us See Christ
5. Church of God, Elect and Glorious

- **Thursday Evening Ladies Bible Study:** The Ladies' evening Bible Study on Thursday is now on break for the summer. While not meeting as a group, many will continue to explore the depths and riches of the word in pairs or smaller, occasional gatherings. The entire group will meet again in August 2026.
- **Building & Grounds:** We are in search for a Building and Grounds Ministry Team Leader. Our hardworking, resourceful, and faithful brother Jim Judkins would like to hand off the baton of leadership to another committed brother (or temporary co-leadership with Jim with intention to fully pass off role later). Being in this role does not mean you have to have repair skills, though helpful, but more so, the ability to delegate tasks, manage regular maintenance schedules, be a point person for repairs done by contractors, keep the elders updated on larger upcoming needs, etc. Having a team of committed men alongside a ministry team leader can make this 13,000sqft building easily manageable to keep in working order. The more repair and maintenance tasks we can do "in house" saves costs in the budget immensely. Please reach out to Jim if you are willing to join a team and/or learn more about stepping into this ministry leadership role.
- **TRI County Baby Bottle Fund Raiser:** Consider supporting our local Options for Women |TRI-COUNTY. You can help support by simply grabbing one of the empty plastic baby bottles, taking it home and filling it with change or dollars. Then be sure to bring it back by Sunday Service on Father's Day. This fundraiser contributes significantly towards the total operating expenses for the year, so it's a really important fundraiser! Your support will help provide free pregnancy tests, counseling, ultrasound services, clothing, and baby supplies for the mothers who are most in need from our community. You can pick-up a bottle after service today from the welcome counter.
- **Hall Of Men:** Hall of Men next **Sunday evening, May 31 6:30pm**. We're reaching back into the annals of history to blow the dust off the writings and work of faithful men of old. For our encouragement, we will listen to a presentation on the life of one of these men, celebrating the grace of God through Christ in him and how by faith he was able to stand firm in the Gospel in the midst of the trials and temptations of his own generation. You don't want to miss it!
- **2026 Graduate Recognition: Sunday, June 7th** we will be recognizing and praying over our 2026 Graduates. If a grad party is planned, please feel free to place an invite on the welcome table and/or announce on the megaphone group through the App Messaging platform.
- **Midyear Partners Meeting:** Coming up on **Sunday, June 14th** we will be having a Midyear Partners Meeting. Partners please plan to stick around after service; the meeting will **begin at 12:00**.
- **Save The Date:** Roberta Behr's 90th birthday celebration. Planned for **Saturday, June 20, from 1 to 3 PM**. **RSVPs are necessary**. Sign-up sheet is in the church entry. More details forthcoming.



SERMON NOTES:

Today's Passage:

Pastor Tony's message is from the
Old Testament book,

Amos 3:3-8