



# New Song Notes

May 2026  
Issue 5

## “I do not think it means what you think it means”.



This phrase is used in the movie *The Princess Bride* when Vizzinni continues to say, “inconceivable!” to unlikely events that happen anyway. Vizzini says it as if the word means impossible, and thus shrugs off warnings and loses valuable time to prepare.

We too use national and religious symbols, and act in ways we believe communicate a common truth, but mean something different to others. For example: kneeling vs. standing for the national anthem or saying the pledge of allegiance or posting the ten commandments in public places. All of these can mean different things to different people. As we enter a month that includes Memorial Day, it would be good to reflect on the symbols we have traditionally known and how they may be seen or thought of today.

Recently Nadia Bolz Weber writes about a well-known and loved symbol. I have included most of her article here for you to consider.

*Yesterday I spent a good hour and a half steaming the creases out of an American flag.*

*I slowly moved our cheap \$24 steamer over each inch of the 5x9.5 cotton, removing its creases and thinking of my father and the 23 years he left for work each morning in his crisp blue uniform. While proud of his military career, and maintaining great affection for a childhood spent on Air Force bases, I’m not normally an American-flag kind of girl. So yesterday I was surprised by how very beautiful I found it as a physical object in my hands and on our dining table. The sturdy fabric. The rich, saturated crimson and blue. The perfect embroidered stars. Beautiful.*

*But if I see a pick-up truck with American flags flying behind its cab while belching diesel fumes into the street, I do not think that person has a commitment to liberty and justice for all. I think, There are so many people in my life who would not feel safe around that person.*

*But I do love my country... I want to take back my country’s flag. And the term patriot, while we’re at it.*

(cont. on pg 2)

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623-584-9418 or 623-584-9656  
Website: [newsongsurprise.org](http://newsongsurprise.org)

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New Song

United Methodist Church

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(Pastor's Message - cont. from pg 1)

*... I keep thinking about interpretation. About who gets to say what a symbol means. About **who benefits from calling their reading the only faithful one.***

*I'm not a terribly sophisticated political thinker, and I do not make a practice of writing about that part of life. Others are far more skilled and informed than I am. Not to mention I am prone to a wee bit of blinding rage, which is no good for anybody, especially me.*

*So I try to stay in my lane.*

*Texts do not act by themselves. People interpret them. And when interpreters privilege the authority of dead men over the dignity of living people, the result is often that the vulnerable pay the price while the powerful call it faithfulness.*

*Not to mention that once a reading is labeled "plain" or "original," dissent can be framed not just as disagreement, but as rebellion against God, law, order, or reality itself. That rhetorical move gives enormous cover to existing power.*

*But I DO dissent.*

*The biblical text, when treated as a Living Word and not simply a dead policy manual, allows meaning, comfort, and wisdom to unfold in both old and new ways for each community that studies it. It allows the Bible to surprise us, live in us, even interpret us.*

*Some may be tempted to walk away from the Bible altogether, and I understand why. I do. But I beg you to reconsider.*

*Because as I've said before, scripture and theology are too potent to be left in the hands of those who only use them to justify their dominance over other people. We cannot cede our scriptures to them.*

*And perhaps the same can be said of the symbols and founding documents of this country. The cost of rejecting them feels too high when reimagining, redefining, and reclaiming are still available to us.*

It is good for us to hold symbols and traditions in a special place and find special meanings to them. I wonder if we could practice being

less judgmental when it comes to how other people see our beloved symbols and be open to other understandings.

This month we also recognize Pentecost, and in the experience of the Holy Spirit touching heads of Christ followers. It was a big misunderstanding. What was being viewed by outsiders as a bunch of drunkards, but was happening was the Holy Spirit.

I pray that the coming month will be another opportunity for us to understand one another better and at the same time honor people, traditions and symbols who mean so much to us. Amen.

Pastor Misty Howick

## PARDON OUR DUST!

As the fence goes up and construction gets ready to start, a few reminders for everyone:

- \* The office is open 9 am - 2:30 pm daily.
- \* Access to the church will be mostly limited to when the office is open.
- \* Magnetic key cards will not be usable to enter the building once the fence is up. They will still be needed to access the office from the hallway or to shut off the alarm.
- \* Meetings need to be on the church calendar so access can be planned.
- \* The main access door will be Door 2 (east door). Follow the instructions on the sign to let the office know you are here.

## SUNSHINE ANGELS TOUR

On March 16, a small group from New Song visited the Arizona Sunshine Angels in Glendale, which provides essential needs to promote self-esteem, education, independent living, self-worth and hope for children in foster care who reside in group homes. There are between 8,000 and 12,000 foster beds in the state of Arizona, so the needs are great.



Throughout the fall we collected suitcases for foster kids which were delivered to them in December, and Tess Wagner from Sunshine Angels spoke to us in January. They are grateful for all we have done.

And there is still work to do.

To see other ways you can help, visit [www.SunshineAngelsAZ.org](http://www.SunshineAngelsAZ.org)



## International Rescue Committee

The Missions Committee is designating the month of May for collections to go to the International Rescue Committee. The International Rescue Committee (IRC) provides opportunities for refugees, asylees, victims of human trafficking, survivors of torture and other immigrants to thrive in America.

Ways we can help include donating to the IRC's Soft Landing Fund, which helps families facing extreme hardship, or providing items needed by these new families, such as new, unopened cleaning supplies; new unopened hygiene items; gift cards; new unopened bedding; new unopened cooking pots & supplies; new trash cans (13 gallon) and new or gently used TVs and laptops.

Donations to the Soft Landing Fund can be written to New Song and placed in the "Thank Offering" envelopes in the pews with either Soft Landing or IRC in the memo line.

Thank you. As Jesus said in Matthew 25, "...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing..."

## MAY SUNDAY SCHEDULE

9:00 am Adult Sunday School, Music Rehearsals

10:00 am Coffee and Fellowship

10:30 am Worship, Sunday School for preschool, elementary children, and youth (start in Worship)

1st Sunday of the month - Communion is served, so youth and elementary children stay in Worship.

Preschool Sunday School is available every Sunday.



# Animals 4 God



## HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY from Animals 4 God!

This month, instead of our usual focus on dogs or cats, we're highlighting an extraordinary otter named Splash.

Splash is a two-year-old Asian small-clawed otter born at Wildlife World Zoo in Litchfield Park, Arizona - a reminder that remarkable things come out of our home state. Today, he serves on a specialized search-and-recovery team.

Otters possess a unique underwater ability that allows them to detect human scent by "tasting" bubbles in the water. When Splash makes a discovery, he alerts his handler, Michael Hadsell of Peace River K9 Search and Rescue, with a distinct squeak. He now assists in locating missing persons in the lakes, rivers, and bays of southwest Florida, stepping in where canine tracking ends at the water's edge.



Click on the otter above to view a video about Splash.



Splash

Off duty, Splash enjoys a well-earned routine of swimming, resting, and recovering after missions - what his handler jokingly calls his "union breaks."

It's always inspiring to see how God uses animals to guide, teach, and support us in our daily lives.

### CAN YOU HELP?

We are passionate about bringing the healing effect of dogs' unconditional love into the lives of people in the community, especially those who are home-bound or in a medical facility. Becoming a therapy dog team involves a bit of work beforehand, but the effort is well worth it. If you or anyone you know is interested in becoming a Dog & Handler team for therapy work, please contact us at: [Animals4God@gmail.com](mailto:Animals4God@gmail.com).

### Interested in becoming a part of our ministry?

You don't have to own a pet or be a member of New Song to join. You just need to have a desire to serve God by planning and participating in activities which enrich the lives of others by sharing our pets. We also strive to do God's will as He challenges us to care for all the animals of the Earth by hosting educational activities with guest speakers and organizing collection events to donate to area shelters. We meet at the church on the 2nd Tuesday of the month at 5:30 pm. We also host the Reading Program on the 2nd Tuesday at 6:00 pm when school is in session.



# Care and Nurture Ministries



## Difficult Conversations

It is good to have a conversation about hospice and end-of-life care wishes long before facing a medical crisis. When a patient has a life-limiting illness and short life expectancy, it can be difficult to initiate a conversation about end-of-life care options. However, it is this conversation that helps a patient have a smooth transition from curative to comfort care when that time comes. Remember, most patients want to discuss end-of-life care options but are looking to their doctor to start the conversation. Here are some tips to expect from your loved one's doctor as you and your loved one begin to put their paperwork in order.

### Conversation Tips

- Start Early – Begin discussing end-of-life care options as early as possible, ideally at the time of that initial diagnosis
- Use Simple Language – Use everyday language to facilitate open conversation.
- Be a Good Listener – Be sure to acknowledge a person's right to make their own choices.
- Prepare – Think about the conversation and questions you want to ask before meeting your loved one.
- Be Patient – Resistance is to be expected, do not get discouraged.
- Follow Up – Make sure to ask your loved one at a later time what questions they may have.

Good communication can facilitate the development of a comprehensive, individualized plan of care that factors in your care wishes for self/or for your loved one's care, wishes and values.

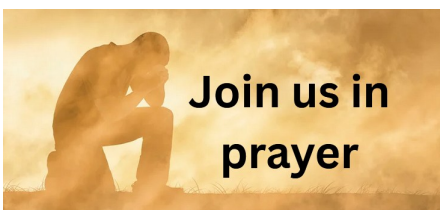
### End-of-Life Starter Questions

- What types of treatment do you prefer?
- What do you value most in life?
- Who do you want to be around when you are dying?
- Where do you want to spend your last days?
- How much pain is acceptable to you?
- Who do you want to make decisions on your behalf?
- Have you completed or started your Advance Directive?

It is always better to have these steps decided before you need them. It is important to have everything in writing so there will not be any question about what you want as it gets closer to making end-of-life decisions.

If you would like to learn more, Sylvia Butler, Sr. Community Liaison, is willing to come to New Song to give the talk, **Advanced Directives Five Wishes Program**. She will bring handouts to help you get started. *If you are interested in attending a presentation on this, please sign up on the sheets in the Information Center.* Chaplain Kathy can also be contacted if you have questions or comments.

Adapted from *Difficult Conversations* cards shared by Hospice of the West



Prayer Force  
Mondays at  
10:15 am

Looking for a Stephen Minister?  
Look for a person wearing  
the blue name badge  
before or after each service or call  
the office.





# Missions and Outreach



**As of March 31, YOU have donated \$1430 to Missions in 2026**

## LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?

Volunteer with other members of New Song at St. Mary's Food Bank the first and third Tuesdays of the month, May 5 & 19, from 9:45 am until noon. We will continue to work through the summer and can use your help!

## EVE'S COOKERS

Eve's Cookers are calling all you bakers out there to make dozens of brownies to take to Eve's Place this summer. Person abuse does not abate during the summer; it may even increase during these months. We hope you will help us fill Eve's freezer. In April, we delivered 47 chicken casseroles and 36 dozen brownies.

<b>Year-to Date 2026</b>	
Brownies	258 doz.
Casseroles	229

Our Brownie Angels bake at home providing dozens of brownies each month. We would love to have YOU join us in this 20+ year old Ministry that helps abused persons.

Financial help is also appreciated. Put Eve's cookers in the memo. Eve's Cookers would like to THANK all our cookers, bakers and our financial helpers that keep this ministry going. Eve's Casserole Cookers will not be cooking May thru August. We will begin again with casseroles in September. If you are interested in helping, or have questions, please contact Ann Haggerty.

## IN THESE TIMES OF NEED, EVERY BIT HELPS. HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO DONATE:

- ◇ Plastic lids that have been washed for a project in Mexico .
- ◇ Change for the Noisy Offering where the children collect money and choose the mission they will support.
- ◇ Appropriate adult and children's books for our Little Free Library (wooden book house in front).
- ◇ Cases of water the first and second Sundays of the month for the hydration station at A New Leaf.
- ◇ Non-perishable food items, other kitchen and baby items, and donations for the International Rescue Committee every Sunday in May.

## KNIT WITS NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Knit Wits meet on the **first Thursday** of each month. Our next meeting will be on **May 5**, from **1 - 3 pm** to create prayer shawls for our community. On April 12, we dedicated 37 new shawls and 16 lap blankets to God for this ministry. The more shawls we make, the more we can donate.

Remember: If you don't know how, *we will teach you!*

Please consider joining us! We would love to see you!

For more information or if you'd like to get started sooner, contact Deanna Leon.

**If you know of someone who could use a prayer shawl, feel free to take one from the worship space to give them.**



## Children's Ministries

Our Children's Ministry Team and Pastoral Staff have a dream. We would like to offer a full week of day camp for the kids in our community. We would offer programs like art, recreation, sustainability (what gardening looks like in the desert,) music and lessons based on the Bible on how to be compassionate. To pull off a dream like this we would need about 30 volunteers. Our dream is looking different day by day as we realize that the construction on our Narthex/Arizona Room will not be completed by June 22nd, our Day Camp proposed week. That doesn't mean we give up. We would still like you to contact us if you are interested in helping. We can train you and we can begin working toward our dream, even if the timeline gets pushed back a year. Let us know you are interested. Sign up here: [allevents.in](http://allevents.in) or contact Rhonda Easa, Pastor Misty or Leslie Oredson.

Help us keep the dream alive!



Thank you to all who became stockholders in our mission trip this year! We appreciate your support!

The youth have chosen to meet only once in May, on **Sunday, May 17**, due to Mother's Day and family vacations.

In June, we will celebrate with an end of the year party on **Sunday June 14** at the Hoffman house.

We will hold regular meetings on **June 28 and July 26**.

Please pray for us as we prepare for our mission trip, **July 11-18**, that God's will be done in the lives of the youth, the adults that work with them, and the families we will help.



## Adult Education

There are several opportunities at New Song for adults to learn more about our faith.

- ◆ **Women's Bible Study** meets **Wednesdays at 9:00 am and again at 10:30 am**. We began a new study in March using *The Twelve Disciples, a Rose Visual Bible Study*. If you have questions, ask either Sally Hamill or Ann Haggerty.
- ◆ **The Men's Breakfast and Bible Study** meets on **Friday mornings at 8am** in the dining room at Fellowship Square (right next to New Song). We have a delicious breakfast buffet for only \$5 and lots of good fellowship. Approximately 8:45 am we walk a short distance to the Catalina Room for the study. We are done between 10:00 and 10:30 am.
- ◆ **Adult Sunday School**: We offer a series of lessons each month. These lessons encourage us to consider what we need to let go of and what we need to take on as followers of Jesus. 9:00 am to 10:00 am, down the church hallway, last room on the right. Contact Jo or Flynn Fuller at [joflynnomad@yahoo.com](mailto:joflynnomad@yahoo.com) with any questions.



# Announcements

## MARRIAGE FELLOWSHIP

Whether newly married or getting ready to celebrate multiple decades together, you are invited to join the Marriage Fellowship. We are looking at alternatives to a regular meeting in May. Contact Kendra Hoffman for details.

## FOREVER FRIENDS

Want to get out of the house? Meet with friendly people? Come to Forever Friends **at 11:45am on Thursday, May 14th.** Bring your lunch as well as your own beverage and table setting. Games after lunch. Bring a favorite game if you like. Questions: contact Myrna Bishop.

## LET'S GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER!

There are many ways to do this! Check out the Prayer bulletin board by the double doors and add your response. Leave a note on the Congregational Engagement doors and read what others wrote. Wear your nametag.

## UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH

United Women in Faith will not meet until construction is finished.

## CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

Are you a caregiver? Would you like the opportunity to share with others who are also caregivers? If so, join us at the Caregiver Support Group! We meet the **2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 10:30 am** at Starbucks on Grand and Reems in Surprise. Look for Pam McNeal Laue and Sabine Kruse (who will be wearing their name tags) and introduce yourself when you arrive. If you have questions, please contact Pam Laue or Sabine Kruse.

## CARD MAKING MINISTRY

People make cards for our Card Ministry and for sale. They make the cards at home on their own schedule. For more information, contact Eileen Johnson .

## BOOK BUDDIES

We will be discussing *The Ones We Wait For* by Michael V. Ivahov on **Monday, May 25 at 1:00 pm** at Jo Fuller's house. We hope that all that love to read will join us.

Upcoming books include:

- 6/22 *Buckeye* by Patrick Ryan
- 7/27 *The Borrowed Life of Frederick Fife* by Ana Johnston
- 8/24 *The View from Lake Como* by Adriana Trigiani



## OUR VISION ...

*is to become a great church that builds the kingdom of God by making disciples of Jesus Christ and by making a difference in the world.*

### OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL AGES

We offer many different ways for service and fellowship with other New Song members and friends: Animals 4 God, Book Buddies, Card Making, Care & Nurture, Caregiver Support, Celebration Choir, Children's Ministry, Dinners for 8, Eve's Cookers, Forever Friends, Handbells, Hospitality Team, Knit Wits, Ladies Hand and Foot cards, Marriage Fellowship, Men's Breakfast and Bible Study, Missions, Needlers, New Member Classes, Praise Team, Prayer Force, Preschool Ministry, Reach Team, Stephen Ministries, Sunday School (for children, youth and adults), UWF (United Women in Faith), Women's Bible Study, Youth Ministry and more.

Check the calendar each month for schedule information and additional opportunities.

### PRAY FOR IN MAY

Each month we are encouraged to pray for different churches in our district.

In May, please pray for:

Sedona UMC, Sedona, AZ  
Shepherd of the Hills UMC, Sun City, AZ  
Shepherd of the Valley UMC, Phoenix, AZ

### LOST YOUR NAME BADGE/ NEVER HAD ONE?

Get a new name tag or badge by signing up on the list at the Information Center. Name badges will be posted on the Information Center once we receive them. The cost is \$8.50. You can put a check in the offering basket. Put **Name Tag** in the memo line.

Or pay at the church office.

### ARE YOU RECEIVING THE BLAST?

If you are not receiving the weekly Blast, first check your spam mail folder. If you cannot find it there, then sign the Blast Sign-up Sheet at the Information Center. Once you have been added, you should receive the weekly

Blast on Thursdays and the monthly newsletter on the last Friday of the month. If you have any questions, contact the office at

[newsong.surpriseaz@gmail.com](mailto:newsong.surpriseaz@gmail.com)

or 623-584-9418.

### REMINDER

The office email address is  
**newsong.surpriseaz@gmail.com.**  
The office phone number is **623-584-9418** or  
**623-584-9656.**

If you send something to church or have your offering sent by your bank, please use this address:

**New Song United Methodist Church  
16303 West Bell Road, Door #5  
Surprise, AZ 85374**

### MINISTERS OF NEW SONG

**The ministers of New Song  
are its members.**

**The staff members who assist them are:**

***Pastor: Rev. Misty Howick***

***Pastoral Assistant: Chaplain Kathy Norris***

***Director of Music: Jeffrey Conger***

***Sunday School Supervisor: Rhonda Easa***

***Nursery Coordinator: Janel Soffa***

***Office Manager: Joanne Croft***

***Office Assistant: Leslie Oredson***

***Treasurer: Amy Tarleton***

***Financial Secretary: Scott South***

***Marketing & Web Manager: Amy Tarleton***

***Accompanist: Alex Lunardi***

***Facilities Manager: Nicolas Hermans***

## IN LOVING MEMORY

**2025** 05/03 Dr. Millard Kimery  
 05/05 Elizabeth Flores  
 06/13 Walter Hopkins  
 06/18 Ione Bartells  
 06/27 Gary Kelley  
 07/08 Terry Locke  
 07/09 LeRoy Messenger  
 07/16 Jerome K. Johnson  
 08/08 Phyllis Russell  
 08/15 Aileah Carlson  
 08/17 Shane Hill  
 08/26 Helen Park  
 09/01 Beth Brashers



10/13 Ken Kraft  
 10/28 Kelly Quinn  
 10/28 Donna Doede  
 12/15 Norma Lawson  
 12/27 Juanita Howard  
 12/27 Joanne Wilson  
 12/30 Terri Nekvinda  
**2026** 01/03 Raymond Drake  
 03/13 Thelma Rush  
 03/13 Darlene McSparran  
 03/27 Gladys Kelley  
 04/02 Tony Kalinski



### OUR MILITARY



**A1C Morgan Ailsieger, ANG**  
**Spec Matthew Farris, US Army**  
**SSgt Kathryn Jones, USAF**  
**WO1 Wesley Meadows, US Army**  
**LCDR Brent Pavel, US Navy**

**E-5 Nicholas Rinker, US Navy**  
**TSgt Malika Sengsavath, ANG**  
**SSgt Kyler Sengsavath, Air Force**  
**Cpl Trayton Stewart, Marines**  
**E-3 Echo Smith, US Navy**

Let us always bear in mind that  
freedom is not free.



5/02 Kay Pratt	5/13 Isaac Hoffman
5/02 Jennifer Martin	5/15 Debbie Tietz
5/04 Ron Croft	5/17 Isaiah Hemp
5/04 Laura Holloman	5/18 Vatsala Patel
5/04 Kyle Whitaker	5/18 Vicki Hunt
5/05 Jerry Hanes	5/18 Dale Tietz
5/06 Margie Breen	5/25 Johnny Cutsinger
5/08 Mike Muzzarelli	5/25 Evie Glasgow-McQueary
5/09 Emma Kiel	5/31 Sarah Luthe



*Happy Anniversary*

5/01 Leslie Oredson & Phil Henry  
 5/14 Dave & Vicki Hunt  
 5/15 Steve & Vivian Glore  
 5/17 Paulette & Phil Holler  
 5/22 Scott & Markita South  
 5/23 Randy & Serene Matthews  
 5/26 Cindy & Jay Davidson  
 5/26 Jeff & Misty Howick



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Blue = Offsite Activities					1 8 am Men's B'fast and Bible Study 1pm SPRC	2 10:00 am New Member Class
3 9 am Adult SS 10:30 am Worship, communion, PreK Sunday School 12:15 pm Worship Committee Meeting	4 9 am UWF Leaders 10:15 am Prayer Force 6 pm Boy Scouts	5 9:45 am Serve at St. Mary's 11:00 am Nominations 1 pm Staff Meeting 4 pm Trustees	6 9 & 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 6 pm Choir	7 10 am Hospitality 1 pm Knit Wits	8 8 am Men's B'fast and Bible Study	9
10 9 am Adult SS 10:30 am Worship, Elem, Youth, PreK Sunday School No Youth Meeting	11 10:15 am Prayer Force 10:30 am Caregiver Support 6 pm Boy Scouts <b>NEWSLETTER</b>	12 1 pm Staff Meeting 5:30 pm Animals 4 God Meeting 6 pm Animals 4 God Reading	13 9 & 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 6 pm Choir	14 10 am Children's Ministry 11:45 pm Forever Friends	15 8 am Men's B'fast and Bible Study 11:15 am Altar Guild	16
17 9 am Adult SS 10:30 am Worship, Elem, Youth, PreK Sunday School 11:45 am Youth Meeting & Lunch	18 10:15 am Prayer Force 6 pm Boy Scouts	19 9:45 am Serve at St. Mary's 1 pm Staff Meeting 4 pm Finance	20 9 & 10:30 am Women's Bible Study 1 pm Missions 6 pm Choir	21 9:30 am Stephen Ministries	22 8 am Men's B'fast and Bible Study	23
24 9 am Adult SS 10:30 am Worship, Elem, Youth, PreK S School	25 <b>OFFICE CLOSED</b> 10:15 am Prayer Force 10:30 am Caregiver Support 1 pm Book Buddies	26 10 am Church Council	27 9 & 10:30 am Women's Bible Study	28	29 8 am Men's B'fast and Bible Study 10 am Pew Buddies	30
31 9 am Adult SS 10:30 am Worship, Elem, Youth, PreK S School 2 pm It's Their Mission @ Dove of the Desert						

# May 2026 Newsletter



**Church Office:**

**Monday thru Friday 9:00am - 2:30 pm**

**Phone: 623-584-9418 or 623-584-9656**

**Newsletter Editor: Joanne Croft at [newsong.surpriseaz@gmail.com](mailto:newsong.surpriseaz@gmail.com).**

**Please send all June newsletter articles by May 10th.**

**If you have items for the Blast and/or for the bulletin,  
please submit them by Tuesday each week.**

**New Song Church  
16303 West Bell Road, DOOR 5  
Surprise, AZ 85374**

PLACE  
STAMP  
HERE