

## January 2020

---

### I've Got To Start...

*J. Brooks Boyd Jr.*

You may actually know someone who has begun a sentence using the above words. The words that this preacher has heard used most often to complete this sentence are “exercising” and “eating right.” It appears that most of us have a sense of what it will take to improve our health.

The key to accomplishing the desired improvement is truly given in this statement. It is the word “start.” We may be playing mind games with ourselves when we utter these words, because if we never start, we will not have to continue the process. Perhaps we feel that we can handle the guilt better than the discipline.

What about spiritually? Have we not also heard someone (ourselves) say, “I’ve got to start studying my Bible regularly?” We believe what Jesus said about those who “hunger and thirst after righteousness” (*Matthew 5:6*), but we are still waiting to start.

What about the one who says, “I’ve got to start visiting like I should”? We believe what James wrote about “pure religion” consisting of visiting the “fatherless and the widows in their affliction” (*James 1:27*), but we just cannot seem to get started.

In reality, when we make these statements, we are taking the first step; i.e., admitting the personal need/responsibility. Now all we need to do is specify. Instead of repeating the “I’ve got to” part, say, “I will start (an activity) today at (a time).” Next, set a reminder and then START! Change for the better will become reality when we do. Paul exhorted, “For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation” (*2 Corinthians 6:2*). Let’s get started today.



# Handbells at New Hope!



The Handbell Choir at New Hope is open to anyone in grade 2 through adult. If you like to make music, we would love to have you!

In an effort to include as many who want to participate in Handbells as possible, we are going to divide the year into three “seasons”. The **Winter Season** will begin in January and end at Easter. The **Spring Season** will begin the week after Easter and end when the school

year ends. We will take a break for summer; and the **Fall Season** will begin in September and end at Christmas.

Handbell rehearsal begins at 4:30pm each Wednesday afternoon. *(A schedule will be distributed at the first rehearsal listing rehearsal and anticipated performance dates.)* We have an agreement with Clymore Elementary and Stuart Middle schools to allow their students who are in the New Hope Handbell Choir ride the bus to the church on Wednesday afternoons for rehearsal. Homework time and a snack are provided for those who arrive after school. *(Please let us know if your child will be arriving early so we have plenty of snacks for everyone!)*

Because handbells are an instrument played by many musicians at once, it is extremely important that all ringers are at rehearsals and performances. A missing ringer means missing notes from a song! For this reason, an agreement listing the expectations for all members of the Handbell Choir will be distributed at the first rehearsal. Each member and his/her parent(s) need to sign and return the agreement at the second rehearsal.

I hope that many will take the opportunity to participate in handbells at least one season during the year!

~ Ms. Alicia



# December at New Hope UMC



# STAY IN THE KNOW

The following are the minutes from the **DECEMBER** meeting of the Church Council. The minutes are available for you to help the entire church family Stay In The Know about how this group is caring for New Hope UMC!

## Church Council Meeting Minutes - December 3, 2019

*Present:* Pastor Mike, Kevin Armstrong, Cindy Deavers, Sam Arnold, Cindy Sheets, Wanda Harding, Robin Craun, Dallas VanLear, JoEtta Walker

The meeting was called to order by Sam Arnold, Chairperson. Devotions were shared by Wanda Harding, followed by an opening prayer. The minutes from the October 2019 meeting were accepted as distributed.

### **Finance Committee:** *(Kevin Armstrong reported)*

~ 84% of the budget has been received, and we are through 92% of the year.

~ We are over budget in office supplies and miscellaneous account.

~ We are on track to pay 100% of our apportionments for the year.

~ It was reported that Pastor Mike obtained a grant from the District Board of Missions for \$10,000 that we will put to paying off the line of credit (*for the Heating and A/C System*), which we currently still owe approximately \$24,840.

- We also received \$1,005 on Sunday, December 1, 2019 to go towards our Building Fund.
- With this total of \$11,005 - our line of credit will go down to approximately \$13,838 that we will still owe on the line of credit for the Heating and A/C System.

~ Since we received so much money in the past few weeks towards the line of credit, it was discussed whether we should still seek a loan from the United Methodist Foundation. After some discussion, it was agreed by all that we should continue to seek out a loan for a lesser amount of money, for a shorter period of repayment time. The new loan we will apply for will be at a 2.8% interest rate for 36 months, at an approximate \$400 per month repayment amount and no balloon payment.

**Treasurer:** *(Cindy Deavers reported)*

- ~ It was reported that the \$4,536.93 that the council agreed to last month was applied to the line of credit *(for the Heating and A/C System)* to pay the bill down.
- ~ \$1,500 had been donated this year to pay for piano repairs and maintenance.
- ~ We still need to payout our promised annual amounts to several mission funds, including the Verona Food Pantry and we will do that this month (December).

**Trustees:** *(Pastor Mike reported)*

- ~ Pastor Mike's new office *(in the old counting room)* is approximately 80%-90% completed. Painting is completed and he will start moving in soon. The internet will be upgraded in his office as well, when we upgrade the rest of the church.

**Worship:** *(Pastor Mike reported)*

- ~ It was reported that we still need to find a replacement for Susan Coffman as chairperson of the Worship Committee, as she is stepping down from the position in 2020.

**Nurture/Spiritual Development:** *(Pastor Mike & Cindy Sheets reported)*

- ~ It was reported that we are looking to find a replacement for JoEtta Walker as chairperson of the Nurture and Spiritual Development Committee, as she wants to step down in 2020.
- ~ We discussed doing the Baby Bottle Ministry again next year, and it was agreed that we will participate in this ministry again during Lent 2020.
- ~ The Children's Ministry asked if they could collect donations for new toys for the Commonwealth Center for Children and Adolescents. They asked if they could put the new toys under the Chrismon tree - this request was rejected. But, they were given permission to collect items before Christmas, (and place the donated items in the Narthex), despite the concern that it was getting late in the season to ask people to purchase and donate items. They also asked if they could do another project in January where they ask for donations of gently used toys to be donated to one of the local charities, possibly the Valley Mission Thrift Store - this request was approved, and further details will be forthcoming.

**Evangelism Ministry:** *(Vacant - Please see Pastor Mike if you are interested in taking on this ministry.)*

**Missions/Outreach Ministry:** *(no reported given)*

**United Methodist Men:** *(Dallas VanLear reported)*

- ~ The UMM met in November for their last meeting in 2019.



- ~ HOTS went well under our new leader (*Sam Arnold*) and also having to deal with some new problems that arose, including having to purchase the turkey and ham from other places of business.
- ~ They still have to pay out some advertising expenses for HOTS.
- ~ After expenses, we'll clear approximately \$5,400-\$5,500 from HOTS - that's down about \$400-\$500 from last year.
- ~ UMM will provide chicken and ham for the upcoming Annual Christmas Dinner on Sunday, December 8th

### **United Methodist Women:** (*Wanda Harding reported*)

- ~ It was reported that the Bazaar during HOTS was very successful and they made over \$1,000 for missions.
- ~ The annual Church-wide covered-dish Christmas Dinner is December 8th at 5:30pm - Meats and drinks will be provided by the UMM.

### **Staff-Parish Relations Committee:** (*Pastor Mike reported*)

- ~ It was reported that the Staff-Parish Committee will meet again sometime before January 10th, 2020.

### **Membership:** (*Pastor Mike reported*)

- ~ 3 new members joined the church on Sunday, December 1, 2019 ~ Nathan Kutz, and Blake & Linda McKibbin

### **Lay Leader:** (*Pastor Mike reported*)

- ~ Jennifer Strother will take over for Dale Rankin as Lay Leader starting January 1, 2020 - as Dale has asked to step down.

### **Communications:** (*Cindy Sheets reported*)

- ~ It was reported that Bruce Rogers and Jeff Hite have pulled the wires for the internet on the main floor, in the Sanctuary, in the a/v room, in the Narthex and down the halls on the main floor. They still have to pull the internet wires downstairs. Once that is complete, we will contact John Riley from John's Computers to have his team come in and finish our IT upgrades.
- ~ There was some discussion about using the service Call-Em-All, so that we will be able to send out emails and phone messages in the case that the church services are canceled due to weather related issues or other unforeseeable reasons in which we would need to get in touch with our church family quickly. It was reported that Call-Em-All offers text messaging for those with smartphones and voice messages for those with regular landline phones. Each message would cost 9 cents each to send out. Pastor Mike stated that he has an existing account with Phonevite with approximately \$90.00 still on the account. Pastor Mike and Cindy Sheets will investigate this further and report back to the council, in which time we will make a final decision on these services.

~ There was also discussion about putting together a new church directory, since it has been a good while since we have had a new church directory made. Cindy Sheets suggested that we use a service called InstantChurchDirectory.com, which gives us the flexibility to have an online directory that is available online (under password protection) and it also allows for us to print off a traditional church directory that people can take home with them and add to their address book. There were concerns raised about having people's contact information available in an online format, even with password protection. It was also discussed that we could produce our own church directory with someone from within our church taking pictures of church members and we could put together our own church directory from scratch. We also discussed possibly bringing in an outside company to do photos for us. We decided to table this issue for now and revisit it again in the new year.

### **Pastor's Report:** *(Pastor Mike reported)*

- ~ Pastor Mike stated that he has asked two different people to take over for Worship Chairperson and they both prayerfully declined. So, he is still looking for someone to take over that position.
- ~ He is also looking for someone to take over for JoEtta as Nurture/Spiritual Development Chairperson.
- ~ Nomination of a new Recording Secretary: Pastor Mike stated that we nominate a Recording Secretary from within the committee. Pastor Mike asked Dallas VanLear *(who will take over as our new Church Council Chairperson in January 2020)*, who he wanted to nominate for Recording Secretary. Dallas stated Cindy Sheets. Pastor Mike asked Cindy if she would accept the position, she said yes. JoEtta Walker seconded the nomination and it was passed and agreed to by all that Cindy Sheets will be the new Recording Secretary for the Church Council in 2020.

### **Unfinished Business:**

- ~ Pastor Mike reported that the new after school program that will be on Wednesdays, will start in the early part of next year for the children who will be dropped off at the church who ride the school bus. Currently, there are 3-4 children each week who are brought by their parents to the Wednesday Children's Music practices.

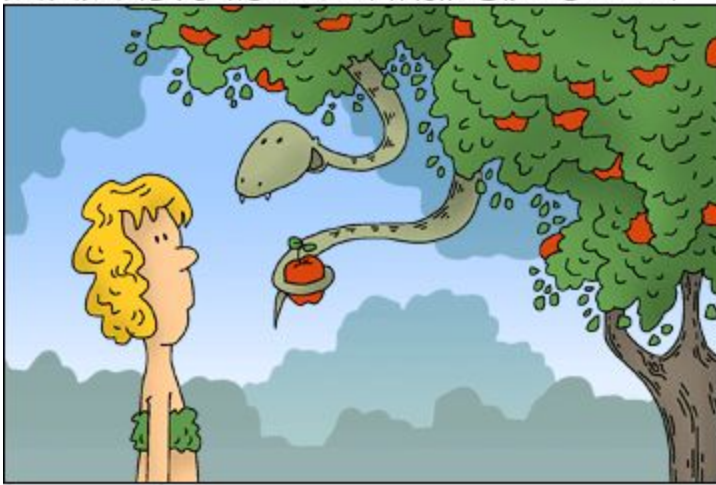
### **New Business:**

- ~ On Wednesday, December 4th - We will have our last Wednesday Night Dinner for 2019.
  - ~ On Thursday, December 5th - the floor cleaners will come and clean the floors in the social hall.
  - ~ On Saturday, December 7th we will have our Parents' Shopping Day Out from 12pm-4pm, and also at 4:30pm will be the annual New Hope Christmas Parade.
  - ~ On Sunday, December 8th @ 4:00pm - Austine Belsky will perform Christmas songs for us at New Hope; and at 5:30pm we will have our annual Church-Wide Christmas Dinner.
- ~ It was agreed that our next Church Council meeting will be on Thursday, January 30th, 2020.

The meeting was closed with prayer by Pastor Mike.

Respectfully submitted,  
Cynthia Sheets

**The next Church Council Meeting will be on Thursday, January 30, 2020.**



(See Genesis 3) 12-30-2013  
REMEMBER THAT NEW YEAR RESOLUTION YOU  
MADE TO TRY NEW THINGS?

## New Year ... Old Jokes

What do you say to your friends  
on New Year's Eve?

I haven't seen you since last year.

Why should you put your  
new calendar in the freezer?

To start the new year in a cool way.

What's the one group that  
hates New Year's Day?

The New Year's Eve clean-up crew.

---

I would like to thank everyone for Christmas Cards and other expressions of thoughtfulness and generosity during Christmas. What a joy it is to serve with you at New Hope.

- Pastor Mike

---



Find us on  
Facebook &  
Instagram!  
**@MyNHUMC**





**BIRTHDAYS** and  
**ANNIVERSARIES**

**3** - Sam Arnold  
- Dana Breeding  
- Jack Walker

**4** - Michelle Chittum  
- Brooke Darrah

**5** - Dave Critzer  
- Bucky Darrah  
- Shirley Western

**6** - Gary Campbell  
- Michael Herman  
- Phyllis Jarvis

**7** - Kristin Walker Kniss

**9** - Barbara Arndt  
- Jacob Schreckhise

**10** - Vinda Shaver

**11** - Jackie Wilberger

**12** - Phyllis Fretwell

**13** - Amanda Corbett

**14** - Will Bergman


**17** - Mildred Hartman  
- Candice Kincaid  
- Jason Shiflett

**18** - Crystal Abbe  
- Lynn Shaver

**19** - Kathy Campbell  
- Gina Davis

**20** - Michael Breeding  
- Laura Jenner

**21** - Kenny Fretwell

**22** - Heather Abbe Fitcham  
-  Bob & Jean Critzer

**23** - Linda McKibbin

**24** - William Critzer

**25** - Christian Deavers  
- Richard Ritchie

**26** - Jeremy McLaughlin

**28** - Gary Lewis

**31** - Denise Duncan

# Upcoming Activities, Events and Meetings at New Hope UMC

## January 2020

### *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

HandBell Practice @ 4:30pm  
Children's Choir Practice @ 5:15pm  
Bible Study @ 6:00pm  
Sanctuary Choir Practice @ 6:45pm

Saturday, January 4 ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

Sunday, January 5 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Tuesday, January 7 ~ Staff/Parish Relations Committee @ 6:30pm

Wednesday, January 8 ~ *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

Thursday, January 9 ~ Trustees Meeting @ 6:30pm

Saturday, January 11 ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

~ Local Expressions Crafting Ministry from 10am-12pm

Sunday, January 12 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

~ Korean Pilgrimage Meeting - after worship

Tuesday, January 14 ~ Nominations Committee Meeting @ 6:30pm

Wednesday, January 15 ~ *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

Saturday, January 18 ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

Sunday, January 19 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

~ Planning Team Meeting @ 5:00pm

Tuesday, January 21 ~ United Methodist Men Meeting @ 6:30pm

Wednesday, January 22 ~ *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

Thursday, January 23 ~ Singles With A Testimony (SWAT) Lunch at

Ciro's Pizza in Verona @ 12:00pm

Saturday, January 25 ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

Sunday, January 26 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Wednesday, January 29 ~ *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

Thursday, January 30 ~ Church Council Meeting @ 6:30pm

Saturday, February 1 ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

Sunday, February 2 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

~ Souper Bowl of Caring - after worship

# Kids' Corner - In The Beginning

by Sharla Guenther



In the beginning there was no earth or sky or sea or animals. And then God spoke in the darkness: "Let there be light!" And right away there was light, scattering the darkness and showing the infinite space. "That's good!" said God. "From now on, when it's dark it will be 'night' and when it's light, it will be 'day'."

The evening came and the night passed and then the light returned. That was the first day.

On the second day, God made the earth and over it He carefully hung a vast blue sky. He stood back and admired His creation. "That's good too!" said God and the second day was over.

The next morning God looked around and thought, "The earth needs to be a bit more organized." So, He put all the water in one place and all the dry land in another. When He had finished that, God made plants to cover the land. Dandelions and daffodils appeared. All sorts of trees and grasses began to grow. "It's looking great," said God and that was the end of the third day.

On the fourth day, God looked around and thought, "The daylight still needs a bit more work and the night is just too dark." So, He made the sun to light the sky during the day

and the moon and stars to add a bit of sparkle to the night. He hung them in the sky and stepped back to look at his work. "This is coming along very well," said God.

The next day, God turned his attention to the water he had collected in the oceans. "I want these waters teeming with life!" As soon as He said it, it was so. In no time, there were millions of small fish darting through the shallow water and huge fish swimming in the ocean. God made birds, too. He sent them soaring through the air. "Ahh, that IS good!" said God. The dusk fell over the water and the sky grew dark and that was the end of the fifth day.

On the sixth day, God added creatures to the land. He made lions and tigers and bears. He made rabbits and sheep and cows. He added everything from ants to zebras to the land. But He still felt something was missing. So God added Mankind to enjoy and take care of all that He had created. God looked around and was happy with all He had made.

After six days, the whole universe was completed. On the seventh day God had a nice long rest and enjoyed looking at all He had made.

*(On this page you will find a report written for our annual charge conference that gives a summary of what the United Methodist Women did in 2019. Next month we will have additional reports for you to read, written by some of the leaders of our church.)*

## New Hope United Methodist Women for 2018-2019

Our United Methodist Women unit of 41 members are very generous in giving for 2018. Sent to the Harrisonburg District undesignated missions was \$1598. Also for designated missions was \$2090 for Henderson Settlement, Red Bird Mission, Camp Overlook, Henry Fork Service Center, Valley Mission, Society of St. Andrews, Mission Central, Legacy Fund, Vacation Bible School, Tangier Mission Trip and WRE. Our three circles contributed to missions: \$1360. Our UMW Unit has received the award for Gold in Mission Today and Six Star Unit from our Harrisonburg District.

Clothing and financial support was given to District Mission Central in Harrisonburg. Our ladies who knit/crochet have participated in the Prayer Shawl ministry providing many shawls, lap robes, baby blankets and prayer squares during the year. Gifts were sent to our high school graduates and regular cards were sent to shut-ins and college students during the year.

We continue to serve United Methodist Men meals for their monthly meetings as well as twice during the summer for their work nights and provide carry out meals for local shut-ins and fire department.

Our programs during this year have included 150 years of Giving as UMW celebrate 150 years of serving; visit from Artie Frederick of Mission Central; and presentation from Kylie Armstrong of her experiences in Africa as student from the JMU nursing program. Led UMW Sunday worship service with guest speaker.

Several ladies as well as Pastor Reaves attended the District UMW Prayer breakfast and program; and also attended the District Spiritual Life Retreat. Honored a congregation member with Special Recognition Pin and donation to missions

Projects have included: educational kits for UMCOR; work night at local thrift store; goodie bags for Bikers for Heroes; back packs and school supplies for students and teachers; shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child; assisted with Parents Night Out.

Co-Sponsor with United Methodist Men the Annual Family and Friends Church Picnic and Christmas Dinner.

Our active member numbers are fewer now as we age however our hearts for serving and witnessing for the Lord are warm and generous. We are thankful for the example, support and encouragement from those who are no longer physically able to be active in our missions.

Wanda Harding  
UMW President



# From Pastor Mike's Desk

January 2020



I wish you a happy and blessed new year. I trust that whatever the new year brings, God will come with it, abounding in grace. The grace might shine like a star, or you might have to look for it; likely a little of both. But God will be lovingly present.

I imagine some of you have made New Year's resolutions. Among our various resolutions, commitments, hopes and dreams, there is one we hold in common as a church in the Virginia Conference of the United Methodist Church. Our vision is to grow disciples of Christ who are lifelong learners who influence others

to serve with God's love. Each of us embodies that differently, but the heart of discipleship is that we are a student – an assistant, really – of Jesus in his life and his ministry.

Trying to be a church without following Jesus is like trying to be an orchestra without playing music. And if you're going to be in the orchestra you must practice. The coming year will bring you God's grace.

Receiving God's grace is like getting a suntan. The sun is always shining, but it's no good if you're not in the right place to receive it. So, we practice getting in the right place to receive God's grace.

That's what spiritual disciples are. "Discipline" is not punishment or uncomfortable rigor; it's simply being intentional. It means practicing. A spiritual practice is anything that focuses your awareness and intention on God.

Prayer, meditation and reading the Bible are obvious examples. It's odd to me how many people claim to be Christians but refuse to pray or read the Bible. Maybe they feel it's irrelevant. (Like scales are irrelevant to musicians?) Maybe they feel they're not "good" at it. (So, they don't need to practice?) Maybe they know if they do it Stuff Will Come Up, and they don't want to face their Stuff. But the more we practice, the more the Spirit encourages us and gives us what we need to face our stuff, even the scary stuff. So, we practice.

If we're going to be the church, it's important that we be intentional about being in relationship with God. It's important for two reasons. One is for you: you miss out on the depth and glory and meaning of life, and the riches of God's loving presence, if you're not paying attention. You may make it through life OK, but you won't have the same depth of joy and love and trust and purpose that you will if you let God's grace be part of your life.

The second reason is for the church. If churches are shrinking, it's because people are not interested in a religious social club. They're interested in changing their lives and doing things that make a difference

in the world. They're seeking real meaning and purpose. And the way you do that is in a community of people who are intentional about meaning and purpose, intentional about being in relationship with God.

So, I invite you to be intentional about spiritual formation in the coming year. Find ways to place yourself in the "sun" of God's grace. Any way will do – praying, reading the Bible, journaling, retreats, participating in a small group – whatever deepens your awareness and openness to God.

I invite you to make a New Year's Resolution: to engage in at least 24 hours of spiritual practice in 2020. Twenty-four hours is a small amount for a whole year – it's basically a half hour a week. Say, fifteen minutes in prayer twice a week. Some of us will surpass 24 hours in the first month, but for others it's a step ahead. It's something we all can do, and we all can commit to. Will you commit to that?

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mike*

---



[If you would like to add an article or announcement to the Hilltopper, please contact us!](#)

**Call/Text: (540) 280-1860 or [NewHopeUMC.Virginia@gmail.com](mailto:NewHopeUMC.Virginia@gmail.com)**

New Hope United Methodist Church - Pastor Mike Reaves  
55 Round Hill School Road; Fort Defiance, VA 24437  
*Mailing Address: P.O. Box 86, New Hope, VA 24469*  
Church Phone: (540) 363-5940 / Parsonage Phone: (540) 363-5612  
Pastor Mike Reaves' Phone: (757) 653-8537 / Pastor Email: [michaelreaves@vaumc.org](mailto:michaelreaves@vaumc.org)

***NewHopeUMC.online***

***Facebook & Instagram: @MyNHUMC***