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## Sowing The Seeds

~ David Sproule ~

Researchers recently revealed that they had discovered date palm seeds in some archaeological excavations in the Judean Desert near the Dead Sea. These date palm seeds were dated to be 2,000 years old. Think about that: ancient seeds of date palm trees that were determined to be from around New Testament times. Questions may have come to mind in finding these seeds: (1) Would the seeds still work? (2) If they still worked, what would they grow? (3) Would they still grow date palms, or would they grow something different than they originally would have?

Whether or not these kinds of questions were actually asked, the results were evident and noteworthy - so noteworthy that worldwide news is being made about these seeds and the resulting saplings. Isn't God's creation amazing! As a believer, you know exactly what



would happen in this situation, but it is still refreshing to see God's procreative power at work. You know from the very first chapter of the Bible that a "seed" would yield "according to its kind" (*Gen. 1:11*). What would come from a date palm seed? Date palms! You would never expect to get anything different. And you never would get anything different. Date palm seeds (no matter how old) produce date palms!

The spiritual application of this is astounding and very compelling! When Jesus explained the parable of the soils, He told His followers, "The seed is the Word of God" (*Luke 8:11*). The sower went out to sow. What he was sowing into the hearts of the people was "the Word of God." Now, whatever the seed produced 2,000 years ago (i.e., whatever the Word of God produced 2,000 years ago) is what the same seed (without any contamination) will produce today!

Read the book of Acts and you find the Word of God being sown everywhere the disciples went, and they were sowing the same seed wherever they went. The seed revealed that Jesus died, was buried and was raised again (*1 Cor. 15:3-4*), and in response, man must hear, believe, repent, confess and be baptized (*Acts 2:37-41*). When the seed was planted and watered, the result (when accepted and acted upon) was a New Testament Christian (*Matt. 28:19-20+Acts 11:26*). Nothing more, nothing less. Those New Testament Christians were all "added" by the Lord to His "church" (*Acts 2:41, 47*), which was purchased by Christ (*Acts 20:28*) and established in Acts 2. They were all added to the "one church" (*Eph. 4:4*), for there was no other church in existence other than Christ's church (having grown from His seed)!

So, what happens when that same seed is sown 2,000 years later? It will produce (and only produce) the same thing!

# February at New Hope UMC



**Parents Night Out**



**Holy Communion Sunday**



**Making Peanut Butter Eggs**



**Souper Bowl Sunday**





The following are the minutes from the **FEBRUARY** 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 - February 27, 2020**

Present: Pastor Mike, Samantha Brensinger, Bianca Brensinger, Robin Craun, Kevin Armstrong, Andy Breeding, Wanda Harding, Jennifer Strother, Cindy Sheets, Cindy Deavers, Karen Whitmer, Jennifer Strother, Kevin Armstrong, Darrel Deavers and Dallas VanLear.

The meeting was called to order by Dallas VanLear, chairman, with devotions by Pastor Mike.

The minutes from the January meeting were accepted as distributed.

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

- ~ It was reported that we still need to focus on paying down our bill for the new roof.
- ~ The paperwork for the annual church audit will be ready by April 1st.
- ~ Stewardship: We are 15.4% of the way through the year and we have received 14.9% of the budget so far.

### **Treasurer's Report:** *(Cindy Deavers reported)*

- ~ There was \$753 sent to the Verona Food Pantry that was collected at the Souper Bowl Sunday.
- ~ \$150 was received to go towards the South Korea Pilgrimage.
- ~ It was noted that if you use the church credit card, please give Cindy Deavers the receipt for the purchase.
- ~ Please use the reimbursement sheets that are located in the library when requesting a refund.

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

- ~ A big thank you to all of those who helped with the church-wide clean-up day.
- ~ The youth room upstairs is ready for the youth group to be restarted.
- ~ Darrell Deavers reported that the drywall in the stairwell has been repaired.
- ~ The next Trustees meeting will be in March.

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

- ~ Pastor Mike reported that someone is considering taking over the role of Worship Chairperson.
- ~ There will be a meeting in March to discuss Easter services.

### **Nurture/Spiritual Development:** *(Samantha Brensinger reported)*

~ Youth Night will be on Friday, March 13, 2020 from 6:00pm-8:30pm.

### **Evangelism Ministry:** *(Pastor Mike reported)*

~ Pastor Mike is working on getting someone to fill this role.

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

~ The mission team will go back to Tangier Island in October 2020.

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

~ It was reported that the Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper was a success with 52 people coming to eat.

~ The UMM will serve the Easter Sunrise Breakfast again this year on Sunday, April 12th.

~ The UMM will host a Ladies Night in May 2020.

~ The next UMM meeting will be Monday, March 9th at 6:30pm. (It was noted that the UMM changed the day of the month that they usually meet, but it will probably be changed again in the near future, due to a misunderstanding.)

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

~ The first week in March all the Ladies' Circles will meet again.

~ March 9th the Circle of Hope serves dinner for the United Methodist Men

~ On March 21st, there will be a UMW Spiritual Life Retreat from 9am-1pm.

~ Reminder that March 8th is Daylight's Savings Time

### **Staff-Parish Relations Committee:** *(Andy Breeding reported)*

~ Met on February 6th to discuss Safe Sanctuary Training.

~ They established two live training dates for the Safe Sanctuary for March 15th and March 29th during Sunday School times - starting at 9:00am - for an approximate 45 minute training.

~ There was a sub-committee established to help with the Safe Sanctuary Training consisting of Andy Breeding, Pastor Mike and Christy Powell.

~ For the Safe Sanctuary: We will have ongoing training every year.

~ There will eventually be an online video made, so that people will be able to take the Safe Sanctuary training course on their own time. And all policies will be available on the website.

~ The next Staff/Parish meeting will be on May 5th.

### **Lay Leader:** *(Jennifer Strother reported)*

~ Announced Harrisonburg District Lay Servant Academy on March 28th from 9am to 5pm at Grottoes UMC. Opportunity for educational classes and encouraged others to consider attendance. Courses offered include Basic Understanding of the Discipline (UM Polity) and Spiritual Gifts. There will be a \$20 fee that will cover the costs of materials and lunch.

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

~ It was reported that the IT internet upgrades have been completed throughout the church. The password for the church wifi is: Methodist2020. Also, the new church website as been up and running online for about three months and can be found at: [NewHopeUMC.online](http://NewHopeUMC.online)

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

- ~ Thanked Bianca Brensinger for taking on the role of Youth Representative.
- ~ Will go to Dupont Community Credit Union this week and have Jennifer Strother's name added to the church's banking accounts and have Dale Rankin's name removed.
- ~ Wants to work on getting a new church directory done before Homecoming this year. May make March 29th a day to start getting pictures of families for the church directory. We will create a new church directory in-house with a new directory committee.
- ~ Thank you for the clean-up day. The youth room is cleaner and more organized.
- ~ Pastor Mike took the opportunity to thank everyone for all of their help with church projects, committees, repair, clean-up, programs, ministries etc. "It's a blessing for the whole church family to help in all of the ways that they can for the good of the whole church and our community." He noted that we should not take this for granted, because not all churches can say the same.
  
- ~ Pastor Mike asked that we all have patience as the potential changes come to the conference after May 15th. He asked that we trust in God, as we continue to focus on our ministries and to continue to do what we do.

## **Youth Representative:** *(Bianca Brensinger reported)*

- ~ Reported that our first Youth Night of 2020 will be on March 13th from 6:00pm-8:30pm
- ~ Wants to do a Lock-In for 24 hours - wherein the youth will fast for 12 hours to help raise money for the Heifer Project.
- ~ The Youth will be selling Peanut Butter Eggs to raise money before Easter.

## **Unfinished Business:** *(Pastor Mike reported)*

- ~ Reported that the names on the bank accounts at Dupont will be changed this week.
- ~ Homecoming will be tentatively set for the last Sunday in September, the 27th.

## **New Business:**

- ~ On Sunday, March 29th, after Worship, there will be a Potato Bar that will benefit the South Korea Pilgrimage Trip.
- ~ The Wednesday Night Dinner will begin again on Wednesday, April 1st.
- ~ It was reported that there is \$2,215.95 in the Wednesday Night Dinner Fund. And that Beth Howdysell has asked to be able to donate a portion of that money to a children's charity in South Korea that she became aware of on her trip.

The meeting was closed by Dallas VanLear, with a prayer by Pastor Mike.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Cynthia Sheets  
Recording Secretary

**The next Church Council Meeting will be on Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 6:30pm.**

# God Wants Us To Laugh....

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03-03-2014

I'M NEW AND JUST WANT TO BE POSITIVE  
I AM PUNCTUAL FOR ANY GUARDIAN NEEDS

How can you tell an Irishman  
is having a good time?

*He's Dublin over with laughter!*

Why do people wear  
shamrocks on  
St. Patrick's Day?

*Because real rocks are too heavy.*



What do you get when you cross a  
four-leaf clover with poison ivy?

*A rash of good luck on St. Patrick's Day.*

Why shouldn't you iron  
a four-leaf clover?

*You might press your luck!*

What kind of bow can't be tied?

*A rainbow!*





**BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES**

1 - Chloe Breeding

2 - Derek Deavers



3 - Lynn & David Dively

5 - Christy Riner Powell  
- Chris Bosserman  
- John Michael DeJong

8 - John Morse  
- Steve Meier  
- Tina Bosserman

10 - Janice Bell  
- Peggy Caricofe

11 - Emerson Gunsalus

12 - Fred Arndt  
- Emily Critzer  
- Katelyn & Lily McLaughlin

13 - Blake McKibbin  
- Tanya Keys  
- Mary Ann Marks  
- Sandra Puffenberger



- Vanessa & Berkeley Harner

14 - Noah Hong



15 - Nora & Charles Darrah

16 - Landon Powell  
- Chelsea Steele

17 - Amanda Barr  
- Erica Miller  
- Ricky Morris

18 - Blake Fretwell  
- Shane McCray  
- Ethan Herman

19 - Kevin Armstrong  
- Randy Craig

22 - Lucy Black  
- Nicholas Bergman

24 - Dolly Harner

25 - Helen Morse

26 - Hailey Hong  
- Roxann Canipe  
- Roger Layman

27 - Doug Gunsalus

28 - Gail Armstrong  
- Joshua Corbin

29 - Glenwood Fretwell  
- Tyler Fretwell  
- Josh Massie

30 - Michelle Booth

# Upcoming Activities, Events and Meetings at New Hope UMC

## March 2020

### *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

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

Sunday, March 1 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am  
~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Monday, March 2 ~ Circle of Hope @ 7:00pm

Tuesday, March 3 ~ Sisters of Faith @ 1:30pm  
~ Circle of Love @ 7:00pm

Wednesday, March 4 ~ *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

Saturday, March 7 ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

Sunday, March 8 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am  
~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Monday, March 9 ~ UMM Meeting & Dinner @ 6:30pm

Wednesday, March 11 ~ *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

Thursday, March 12 ~ Trustees Meeting @ 6:30pm

Friday, March 13 ~ Youth Night from 6:00pm-8:30pm

Saturday, March 14 ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am  
~ Worship Committee Meeting @ 10:00am

Sunday, March 15 ~ Safe Sanctuary Training @ 9:00am  
~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Wednesday, March 18 ~ *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

Saturday, March 21 ~ New Hope Ruritans Big Breakfast ~ 7am-10am  
~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am  
~ District UMW Spiritual Life Retreat from 9am-1pm  
~ Local Expressions Crafting Ministry from 10am-12pm

Sunday, March 22 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am  
~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Wednesday, March 25 ~ *\*Wednesday Evening Activities*

Thursday, March 26 ~ Singles With A Testimony (SWAT) Lunch at  
Ciro's Pizza in Verona @ 12:00pm  
~ Church Council Meeting @ 6:30pm

Saturday, March 28 ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am  
~ Harrisonburg Lay Servant Training from 9am-5pm @ Grottoes UMC

Sunday, March 29 ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am  
~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am  
~ After Worship - Potato Bar benefiting the South Korea Pilgrimage



# Kids' Corner - Jacob's Ladder

by Sharla Guenther

This story from the Bible is about Jacob. If you don't remember he had a twin brother named Esau who

he tricked out of his blessing from his father Isaac. Even though they were twins, Esau was born first so he should've received the special blessing from his father, not Jacob.

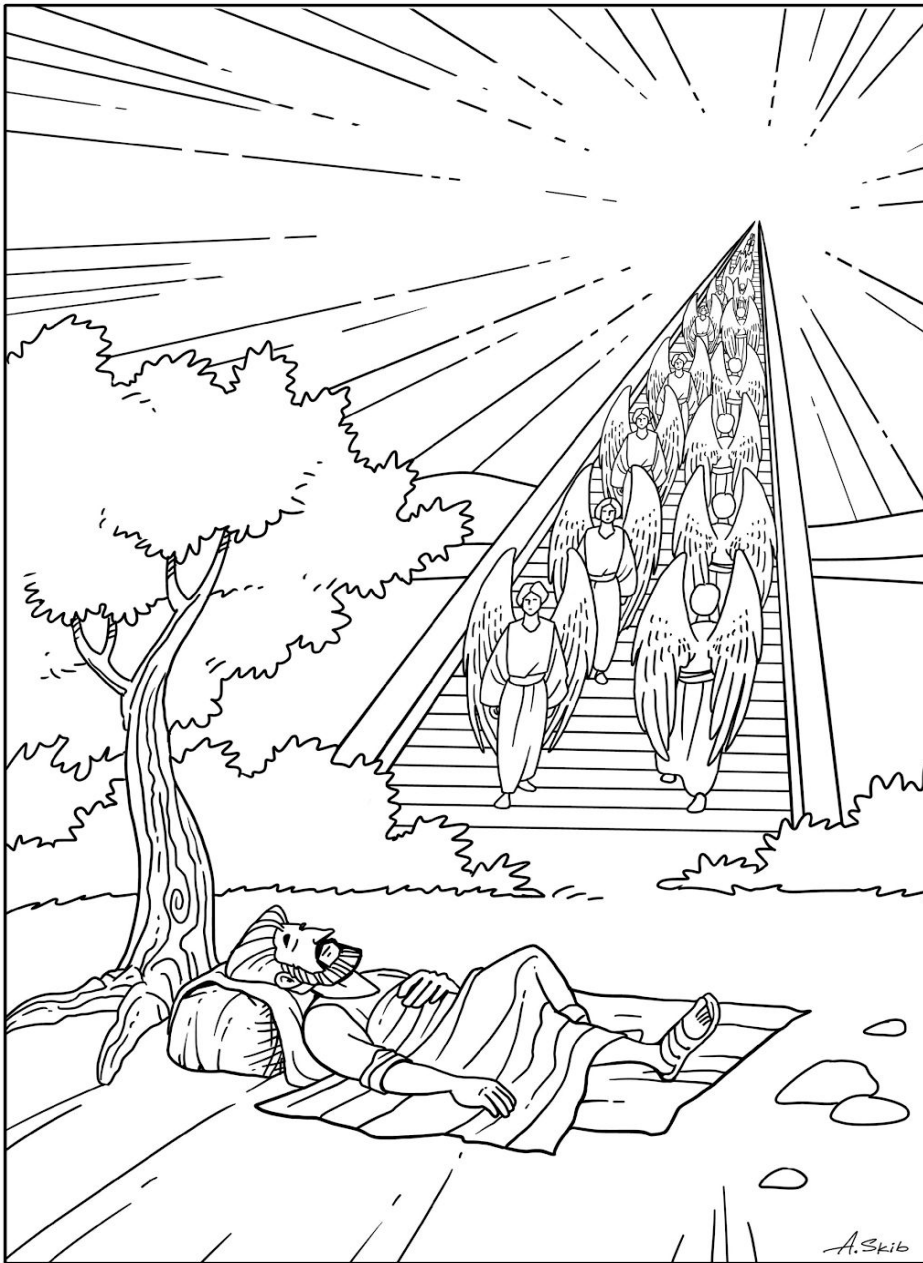
Jacob and his mother Rebekah tricked Isaac by making Jacob seem hairy like his brother Esau. Since Isaac could barely see he wasn't able to tell who was who. In the end Esau was very upset that he didn't receive the special blessing so he decided he would kill Jacob as soon as their father died.

It may seem very wrong that Jacob took Esau's blessing but it was supposed to happen this way. The Lord told Rebekah when she was pregnant that she had two nations inside of her, one would be stronger than the other and the older will serve the younger.

So even though Jacob wasn't originally supposed to receive the blessing, this is the way God wanted it to be.

Rebekah knew about Esau's plan to kill Jacob so she told him to get out of town until Esau wasn't so mad anymore.

So Jacob left. I'm thinking Jacob either walked or was riding a horse and at the end of a long day of



travelling he decided to stop for the night.

It must have been a warm evening because Jacob just slept under the stars. He didn't have a pillow with him (which even if he had, I'm not sure they would be anything like the pillows we have now), so he found a good size stone to lay his head on.

He must have been tired because he fell into a deep sleep and began to dream. First he saw a long stairway that touched the ground, with the very top of it reaching heaven. Maybe in his dream heaven was where the clouds were, it doesn't say.

Next he saw angels of God moving up and down the stairway. I imagine they were floating just above the stairs almost like one escalator going up and the other down. Above the stairway or even close to Jacob stood the Lord. The Lord then spoke to Jacob saying, "I am the Lord, the God of your father

Abraham and Isaac. I will give you and all your family to come, the land on which you are lying. Your family will continue to grow through each generation, as much as the dust of the earth" (which is LOTS!).

"All of your family will spread out all over and you will bless those around you. I will always be with you, watching over you and will return you to this land until I have done everything I have promised you."

When Jacob woke up he realized that the Lord had been with him there. He was afraid because of the power and presence of God and said, "How awesome is this place! This is the house of God, this is the gate of heaven."

Before he left, Jacob used the stone that he rested his head on and set up a pillar and poured oil on it. This is like a marker for Jacob to remember the dream he had from God and to remember and thank God for the promise He made to him.

He called the place Bethel which means House of God.

Then Jacob made a promise to God, "If God will be with and watch over me on my journey and provide me with clothes and food, and bring me back home safe; then the Lord will be my God and the pillar that I have made will be God's house, and all that you give me I will give one tenth in return."

Jacob had an amazing experience. I'm sure no one would be able to convince him that his dream wasn't a special message from God just for him. God can speak to us in many ways: through other believers, our conscience, through his creation, and through dreams as well.



**We will have pizza, popcorn, nachos,  
a good movie and youthful fellowship!**

***Friday, March 13th from 6:00pm-8:30pm***

# From Pastor Mike's Desk

March 2020



The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday every year and marks forty days leading up to Easter – the resurrection of our Lord, Jesus. Lent is usually a time when we fast, pray, reflect, and exercise discipline. Lent is also usually a time when we give up something for the forty days leading up to Easter. Some people may give up chocolate; some people may give up meat; others may give up television; and, still there are some who may go even further and decide to give up some bad habit for the forty days leading up to Easter. What have you decided to

give up during the Lenten season?

I think it is a good idea to give up certain things during the Lenten season; however, I think it is even better to take the discipline even further after Lent. If giving up something (i.e., sweets, alcohol, meat, smoking, etc.) will make your life better, why not continue the discipline even after Lent? In the first century, when Jesus was in Capernaum, he spoke to his disciples and said, “If your hand causes you to sin, cut it off. It’s better to enter eternal life with only one hand than to go into the unquenchable fires of hell with two hands. If your foot causes you to sin, gouge it out. It’s better to enter eternal life with only one foot than to be thrown into hell with two feet. And, if your eye causes you to sin, gouge it out. It’s better to enter the Kingdom of God with only one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell...” (Mark 9:43-48).

Now, let me say this, the passage that I quoted from above is full of metaphorical language; so, please make sure that you don’t cut off any limbs. However, what Jesus is saying is that sometimes things must be removed from our lives for us to walk (live) into the fullness of God’s peace, love, and joy. Whenever we are making major changes, it is always hard in the beginning; but there is an abundance of benefits in the end. Therefore, let me ask you again: What have you decided to give up during the Lenten season? And, let me encourage you to move beyond just giving something (i.e., some bad habit) up for Lent; and, give it up for a lifetime – if it will make your life better.

Finally, as you contemplate what changes you need to make in your life for Lent and beyond, remember that ancient proverb in the Hebrew Bible that says, “For a just person falls seven times, and rises up again.” In the words of the late singer, Nat King Cole, “So take a deep breath, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, and start all over again.”

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Mike*



## Safe Sanctuary Training

Sunday, March 15th  
@ 9:00am

Sunday, March 29th  
@ 9:00am

**This training is required for everyone who will be participating in church-related functions where children, the elderly or those who have physical or mental challenges will be present.**

**This training is for the safety of us all.**

**Please plan to come to one of the live training opportunities.**

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***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)**

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