

# The Hilltopper



**July 2020**

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## *From Pastor Mike*

*God is good! All the time! – All the time! God is good!*

How I have missed saying those words with you on Sunday mornings.

After nearly four months of online worship, we will have our first service together on Sunday, July 5<sup>th</sup> at 10:30 a.m. Communion will not be served. There will be no Sunday School classes or Nursery for the next few months. We encourage everyone to proceed with caution. Senior citizens and those with underlying health conditions should stay at home. Your safety and well-being are our primary concern.

If you plan to come back to worship at New Hope UMC, there are a few things you will need to know first:

- **Face coverings are required.** Bring your own. Scarves and bandanas are OK.
- All children are welcome, but they must wear a face covering. Parent(s) will need to determine if their child can wear a face covering
- Social Distancing: 6 feet apart. Households will stay together.
- Try not to arrive before 10:15 a.m. The seats in the Narthex will be removed.
- Ushers will promptly seat you when you enter and dismiss you row by row.
- No bulletins will be handed out. The bulletin will be viewed on the monitors. For those who are interested in having a printed bulletin - the bulletin will be available by Saturday each week on the website at: [newhopeumc.online/weekly-bulletins](http://newhopeumc.online/weekly-bulletins) - You can either print your own copy and bring it with you, or you can view the bulletin on your phone by using our mobile site during the worship service.
- No singing. The hymnals will be removed to eliminate any surface contamination.
- No hugs or handshakes. Greet each other with an “air hug” or “air high five.”
- The service will be shorter. (Approx. 45 minutes)

For the next few months, we will be worshiping with these safety measures in place. Some measures will be removed when our Bishop decides it is safe. If you do not feel you can come to worship under these temporary conditions, then please stay at home. If you have access to the

internet, you can watch the worship service live online on either our Facebook page or website at: [newhopeumc.online/past-sermons](http://newhopeumc.online/past-sermons) The worship service video will also be available on our website if you would like to view it at a later time. If you have a DVD player, you can request a DVD of the service be delivered to you.

If you plan to join us for worship in the sanctuary on July 5<sup>th</sup> or any other Sunday, then here is what you need to know first:

- Complete the Health Authorization Form
- Register and let us know you are coming no later than Wednesday each week
- Check your temperature on Sunday morning. If your temperature is 100.4° or higher, you must stay home. If you are sick (cough, sore throat, headache, etc.), please stay home.

Complete the Health Authorization Form and register for worship by calling the parsonage at 363-5612 or the church at 363-5940. I can take your information over the telephone. If you use email, then you can email me at [michaelreaves@vaumc.org](mailto:michaelreaves@vaumc.org) with your information. The Health Authorization Form only needs to be completed once, but you should update it if there is a change. Registering in advance helps us plan for a safer environment on Sunday mornings.

I know that some of these changes may dampen your enthusiasm for returning to church. Wearing a face covering takes some getting used to. Others have legitimate health concerns and they cannot wear face coverings. Some folks do not understand why we cannot sing or hug one another. We are simply being extra cautious by following the advice of the CDC for groups gathering indoors.

I know it is weird having to register for worship, but I assure you, this is nothing more than a tool to help us be better prepared. If you register and later decide to stay home for some reason, that is OK. Our goal is to worship God together without posing a threat to our community. We must be good neighbors and do all we can to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus to anyone who steps onto church property.

Finally, remember this is temporary. We have no idea what “normal” will look like or even when it will come. We will figure this out together. Our first Sundays back may be a little awkward as we learn something new. It will take time to get comfortable with this new environment.

Be patient with each other and love one another under less than ideal circumstances. The love of Christ that we share is not limited to when all is well and good. Love that is shared during trying times is more precious than gold or silver. If we can do that, then the words we like to share on Sunday mornings will mean something powerful and life changing.

*God is good! All the time! – All the time! God is good!*

Yours in Christ.

*Pastor Mike*



The following are the minutes from the **JUNE** meetings 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 - June 25, 2020**

Present (*in-person*): Pastor Mike, Dallas VanLear, Kevin Armstrong, Wanda Harding, Cindy Sheets, Karen Whitmer, Alicia Copeland, Teresa Barr, Andy Breeding and Jennifer Strother.

The meeting was called to order by chairman Dallas VanLear, with devotions and prayer by Teresa Barr.

The minutes from the May meeting were accepted as distributed.

### **Finance Report & Treasurer's Report:** (*Kevin Armstrong reported*)

~ Our church needs \$10,000 per month to operate and pay our monthly bills. We have received \$10,155 in donations since our last meeting. We have enough money right now to operate for 4 months.

~ We have received over \$5,300 from the insurance company to fix our church welcome sign.

~ We still owe \$12,776 on our line-of-credit loan. The interest rate has gone down recently.

~ We paid \$5,718 for our insurance for the upcoming year.

~ Once we show all of our records and prove where/how we have used the money (i.e., using it for payroll, pastor's insurance, etc.) - the Paycheck Protection Program loan from the federal government that we received, should be converted to a grant, once our qualification goes through. Therefore we should not have to repay the loan of over \$13,000 that we received from the federal government.

**Trustees:** *(Teresa Barr reported)*

- ~ The carpet in the nursery has been replaced. The cost was \$1,700.
- ~ There are reports that mice are becoming a problem again in and around the church. There will be steps taken to take care of this problem.
- ~ The trustees will meet again in August.

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

- ~ They have completed the annual clergy evaluation and it was submitted online before the deadline.
- ~ On July 1st, the parsonage evaluation is due and that will be taken care of by the committee.

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

- ~ The UMM will have a work-night next week to work on pulling out the weeds, trimming the shrubs and other misc. things, to get the church looking good for when we return to in-person worship. They plan to have another work-night in July to mulch.

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

- ~ Everything is still on hold.
- ~ Pastor Mike stated that the UMW can now have circle meetings in the church social hall; as long as there is social-distancing and mask wearing by the attendees.

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

- ~ The online bible study was finished during the 2nd week of June. 11-12 people participated.
- ~ Online worship will be continuing for those who do not want to come to the church in-person. On the 1st of June, Austine Belsky came back to join our online worship services.
- ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer continues on Saturdays.

~ Healthy Church Team continues to meet on Tuesdays to help us move forward with reopening, and to make sure everyone follows the rules and procedures.

~ On July 5th, we return to in-person worship. We have received permission from the District Superintendent to return. We will be allowed to have 70-75 people inside the sanctuary. There will be seating and traffic charts and signage for the congregates to follow when we return.

- Jeff and Laverne Herring have cleaned the bathrooms, the sanctuary and the narthex.
- We will be blocking off areas of the church that people will not be allowed to go to - i.e., the downstairs, the upstairs, the kitchen, etc.
- There is a video on our website that explains what to expect when we return.
- We will follow social-distancing procedures (staying 6 feet apart), and wearing face masks properly will be required to come into the church.
- There will be 2 doors - one for entry and one for exit.
- The handicap bathroom and men's bathroom will be available to use by anyone. The women's bathroom will only be available to any person(s) that get sick during the service.
- Everyone will have to fill out the Health Authorization Form in order to attend in-person services. Anyone who wishes to come to in-person worship must also register, by letting Pastor Mike know of your desire to come to in-person worship. (As of the date of this meeting, 27 forms have been returned.)
- What if someone refuses to wear a mask that covers their mouth and nose? Basically, if you don't want to wear a mask, you should stay home. The person will be asked to put a mask on, and if they do not, the entire worship service will be canceled for everyone and everyone must immediately go home. We will be firm, but gentle in reminding people about social-distancing rules.
- We will try in-person worship for awhile and see how things go. We may need to continue to revise our worship services as we go along and see how things go.
- Mike has been calling those people who do not have computers to contact them and let them know about the reopening and see if they are interested in coming to in-person worship. A letter will also be sent out to these people so that they have all the information that they need.
- The social hall may be used as an overflow room for families with kids, so that they can have more room to spread out.
- There will be no nursery, no Sunday School, and no Kid's Rock until further notice.
- The worship service will try to be kept to about 45 minutes.
- When Virginia goes into Phase 3 (on July 1st), this will not affect our church's procedures for now.
- Please be patient with each other during this time.

## **Old Business:**

~ Kevin thanked Wanda and Karen for coming in and counting the donations that have been received through out this time.

~ Kevin made a motion to move the money that we received from the insurance company (approximately \$5,300) for our new church sign - to move it to pay down the principal on our line-of-credit that we still owe (approximately \$12,700). Teresa seconded it and it was passed by all.

~ A new church sign has not been decided on at this time.

~ Kevin reminded all the heads of the committees that the budgets for next year are due in July.

## **New Business:**

~ Karen announced that her and Wanda will continue to volunteer to count the tithes and offerings; so that no one else has to worry about staying after church every week and handling the money.

The meeting was closed by Dallas VanLear with appreciation for everyone making an effort to be there during this uncertain time. He thanked Karen and Wanda for their continued extra efforts.

Pastor Mike thanked everyone in the committee for their leadership during this time.

Pastor Mike closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Cynthia Sheets  
Recording Secretary

**The next Church Council Meeting will be on Thursday, July 23, 2020.**

# Have a Laugh...



**What did Paul Revere say at the end of his ride?**

*"I gotta get a softer saddle!"*

**Did you hear the one about the Liberty Bell?**

*Yeah, it cracked me up!*

**What kind of tea did the American colonists thirst for?**

*Liber-tea!*

**Why did Paul Revere ride his horse from Boston to Lexington?**

*Because the horse was too heavy to carry!*

**What did one flag say to the other flag?**

*Nothing. It just waved!*



**BIRTHDAYS** and  
**ANNIVERSARIES**

1 - Kyle VanLear


3 - Stephanie Kerley

4 - C.J. Botkin  
- Suzanne Lank  
- Irene Morrison

6 -  Leon & Mary Sheets

7 - Ava Funk

8 - David Shiflett  
- Jeffrey Walker



9 - Barbara Greene  
- William Harding  
- David Layman  
-  Charles & Phyllis Fretwell

10 - Clara Breeding


12 - Louise McCray  
- Nathan Selmon  
- Natasha Ritchie  
- Tuck Rogers

13 - Debbie Arnold

15 - Dakota Canipe  
- Hilda Painter

15 -  Hunter & Martha Black  
-  Jerry & Susan Coffman

16 - Andrew Viers  
- Jase Harding

17 - Theresa Humphries  
-  John & Helen Morse

20 - Heather Arndt

22 - Helen Stogdale

23 - Timothy Howdysshell  
- Margie Selmon

26 - Cathy Lewis

27 - Becky Breeding

28 - Mary Sheets  
- Earl Wilberger

29 - Arlene Crist

31 - Julia Arndt  
- Nancy Howdysshell



# Kids' Corner - Zacchaeus

by Sharla Guenther



Today's story is about a man many people didn't like. They called him a sinner, which is funny because aren't we all sinners? Don't we all make mistakes and do things we shouldn't?

The story starts with Jesus entering a place called Jericho. These days Jesus had been going around telling parables and performing many miracles.

The word was spreading about this man named Jesus and the amazing things he was doing and saying. So it was common when Jesus came to a place people would rush to see him.

Just imagine if a famous person came walking into your town or down your street. People would be telling their friends and very quickly there

would be a large crowd around them. This is how it was for Jesus.

In this town that Jesus was entering lived a man named Zacchaeus. He was the chief tax collector in this place and had lots of money.

If you've heard the word taxes before it's probably not because people like them. Everyone that works pays taxes to the government or the people that run the city and country you live in. In some countries taxes help pay for doctor visits or to make or fix roads, pay for parks, or help those who can't work.

Taxes for the most part help us live better so they really are a good thing, the problem is that

sometimes (and that includes the times in the Bible) people who got the tax money didn't always spend it properly or they took some of the money for themselves (which is stealing).

So the people from Jericho didn't like Zacchaeus very much, especially because he had lots of money and a big house. They figured he had taken some of the tax money for himself.

Back to the story. Zacchaeus had heard a commotion and soon realized that Jesus was in Jericho, so he rushed like everyone else to see Him. When he got to the crowd he couldn't see anything. He figured Jesus was in the middle of it somewhere but standing on his tiptoes he still couldn't even see Jesus.

You probably know what its like to be shorter than all the adults around. Well, Zacchaeus wasn't very tall for a grown-up and couldn't ask someone to pick him up to see better, that would've been silly!

So Zacchaeus saw a sycamore tree in the corner of his eye and decided to climb it so he could see Jesus.

I just wonder if Zacchaeus thought it might be strange for a grown man to climb a tree? Especially since he was an important person in government. Whatever he thought he did it anyway and didn't seem to care.

When Jesus reached the spot Zacchaeus was he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." So he came down right away and welcomed him gladly.

This is so cool! First, Jesus knew Zacchaeus' name without asking him first. Second, Jesus didn't care that other people didn't like Zacchaeus, he wanted to visit with him at his house anyway. Third, Jesus said that he **MUST** stay at his house today. This means that Jesus knew that God wanted him to go there and Jesus obeyed.

Jesus asked to go to Zacchaeus' house in front of everyone and as soon as they heard this they all started talking among themselves. They were shaking their heads and saying "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.'"

I'm sure they both knew what people were saying but Zacchaeus jumped out of the tree and said to the lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my money to the poor, and if I have cheated or stole anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

The important part about this is that Zacchaeus had a change of heart. I don't know if he was already thinking about repaying people back or he just knew what he should do when he saw and talked to Jesus.

He also said that he would pay back people four times the amount. So if he owed someone one dollar he would pay them back four extra dollars! Zacchaeus didn't have to do this but he wanted to make things more than right.

When Jesus heard this he said, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

Jesus meant that he had forgiven his sins and that even though people didn't think Zacchaeus was good, God loved him too and knew that his heart was good.

Then the very last part Jesus said that he came to seek and to save the lost. This was the whole point as to why God sent His son Jesus to come to earth. To find those who didn't know God and were lost and to show them who God is so they could live forever in Heaven with Him.



Due to cancellation of VBS this summer, our folks have prepared and delivered “goodie bags” showing care and love to our children who would have participated in VBS.

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# Newsletter

[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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