

# *New Hope United Methodist Church's Monthly Newsletter*

## The Hilltopper



## January 2024

### *From Pastor Mike*

Dear Beloved,

As we welcome the dawn of another year, I find myself reflecting on the journey we have shared and the path that lies ahead. The new year brings with it a sense of renewed hope and possibility, a chance to deepen our faith and our commitment to one another and the work of God in our world. In the words of Isaiah 43:19, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland."

The excitement of a new year in ministry is real. It's a time to dream, to envision what our community can achieve together under God's guidance. We look forward to continuing our cherished traditions and embracing new opportunities to grow in faith and service. Our journey is not a solitary one; it is a shared experience, rich with the potential for personal and communal transformation.

However, with new beginnings also come challenges. We are called to navigate these with grace, understanding that they are part of our growth as a community of faith. Change can be uncomfortable, yet it is often during change that we encounter God most profoundly. As we face these challenges, let us remember that we do not face them alone. We have each other, and we have God, who guides and sustains us through all things.

Please pray for the leadership of our church which includes some fresh faces.

We welcome Becky Breeding as our Council Chair, Bill Lalla as our Lay Leader, and Sandy Wyrick as our Staff-Parish Chair. Prayer for them and continue to pray for those who remain in their positions after serving faithfully in 2023 – Kevin Armstrong (Finance Chair), Cindy Deavers (Treasurer), and Corey Johnson (Trustees Chair).

I also want to thank our outgoing Council Chair, Dallas VanLear, and SPPRC Chair, Andy Breeding. Both have served faithfully and with integrity.

Maybe God is speaking to you about using your gifts in some lay ministry at New Hope. Listen to that voice. Sit with it. Is there a void in leadership that you are uniquely qualified to fill? Or is there a ministry that you are enthusiastic about? What can we do to help nurture those gifts through our shared ministry? Let's talk.

This year, let us commit to supporting one another more intentionally, to listening more deeply, and to opening our hearts to the many ways God speaks to us. Let us be bold in our outreach, kind in our interactions, and steadfast in our faith. Together, we can continue to build a community that reflects God's love and grace.

As your pastor, I am here to walk with you, to listen to you, and to support you. I look forward to the conversations we will have, the prayers we will share, and the service we will render together. Let us step into this new year with faith and hope, trusting that God is with us, guiding our steps, and blessing our journey.

In Christ's Love and Service,

*Pastor Mike*

# January

3 ~ Dana Breeding, Jack Walker

5 ~ Shirley Western

6 ~ Phyllis Jarvis

7 ~ Kristen Walker Kniss

12 ~ Phyllis Fretwell

17 ~ Rick Grande

20 ~ Michael Breeding, Laura Jenner

21 ~ Kenneth Fretwell

23 ~ Linda McKibbin

25 ~ Christian Deavers



## Anniversaries and Birthdays

*\*If your birthday or anniversary is not listed, please let us know and we will update our records.*



## Church Council Meeting

The Church Council  
did not meet in December.

Our next meeting will be  
on Thursday, January 25th  
at 6:30pm.

The minutes to that meeting  
will be available in the  
February newsletter.

# How to have a Happy New Year

What phrases are you tired of hearing? I asked this question once in a class and was surprised by the number of statements that came from the students. Among those mentioned was the simple wish: "Happy New Year!"

I must confess that I love to hear the phrase because it reminds me of the promises of Jesus when he gave us the beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12.

Most English Bibles translate these sayings as "blessed is the." Actually, the translation more accurately should read "happy is the."



Substituting the word, "happy," for "blessed," we read –

"Happy are...the poor in spirit...those who mourn...the meek...those who hunger and thirst for righteousness... the merciful...the pure in heart... the peacemakers...the persecuted... the insulted....the persecuted."

The world cannot comprehend this. What the world doesn't understand is, with Jesus, we can be happy even when we are humiliated, mourning, being meek, hungering, etc.... *because we have Jesus in our hearts!*

So with that..... **I hope that you have a Happy New Year!**

*Larry Fitzgerald - Abilene, TX*



May the God of hope  
fill you with all joy  
and peace as you trust  
in him, so that you may  
overflow with hope  
by the power of the  
Holy Spirit.

**Romans 15:13**



12-29-2014

MY NEW YEARS RESOLUTION THIS YEAR IS TO DO THE THINGS I SHOULD HAVE BEEN DOING LAST YEAR

Last year, I was able to keep all of my New Year's resolutions...

....tucked away in a journal on my bookshelf.

What New Year's resolution should a basketball player never make?

To travel more.

Did you hear about the guy who started fixing breakfast at midnight on December 31st?

He wanted to make a New Year's toast!

My resolution was to read more...

...so I put the subtitles on my TV.

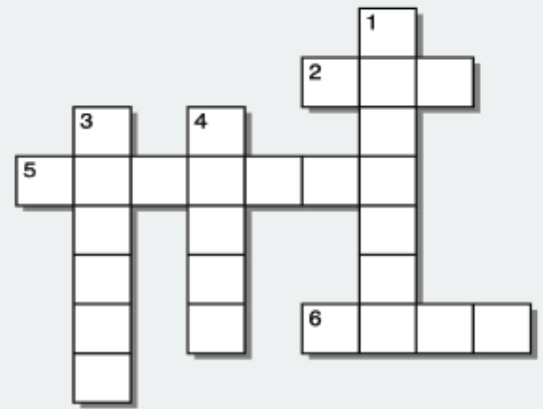
Not to brag, but I already have a date for New Year's Eve.

It's December 31st!

My New Year's resolution is to stop procrastinating...

...but I'll wait until tomorrow to start.

# CrossWORD



## "Noah's Descendants"

Genesis 10

### Across

- 2) A son of Noah
- 5) A city Nimrod built
- 6) A son of Noah

### Down

- 1) A son of Noah
- 3) A mighty hunter
- 4) In his day the earth was divided



# *A New Year: Time To Take Inventory*

As we begin a new year, may we “take inventory” of our spiritual lives. Most businesses or organizations (the ones that are successful) will ask three questions in terms of their direction: “Where have we been? Where are we? Where are we going?” Our spiritual lives are of far greater importance than any business or organization. The church is paramount and is no comparison to some man made organization or institution. But, we can draw a few parallels when taking inventory of our spiritual lives. Second Corinthians 13:5 says, “Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?”

Please consider the following questions as you plan your spiritual growth for 2024:

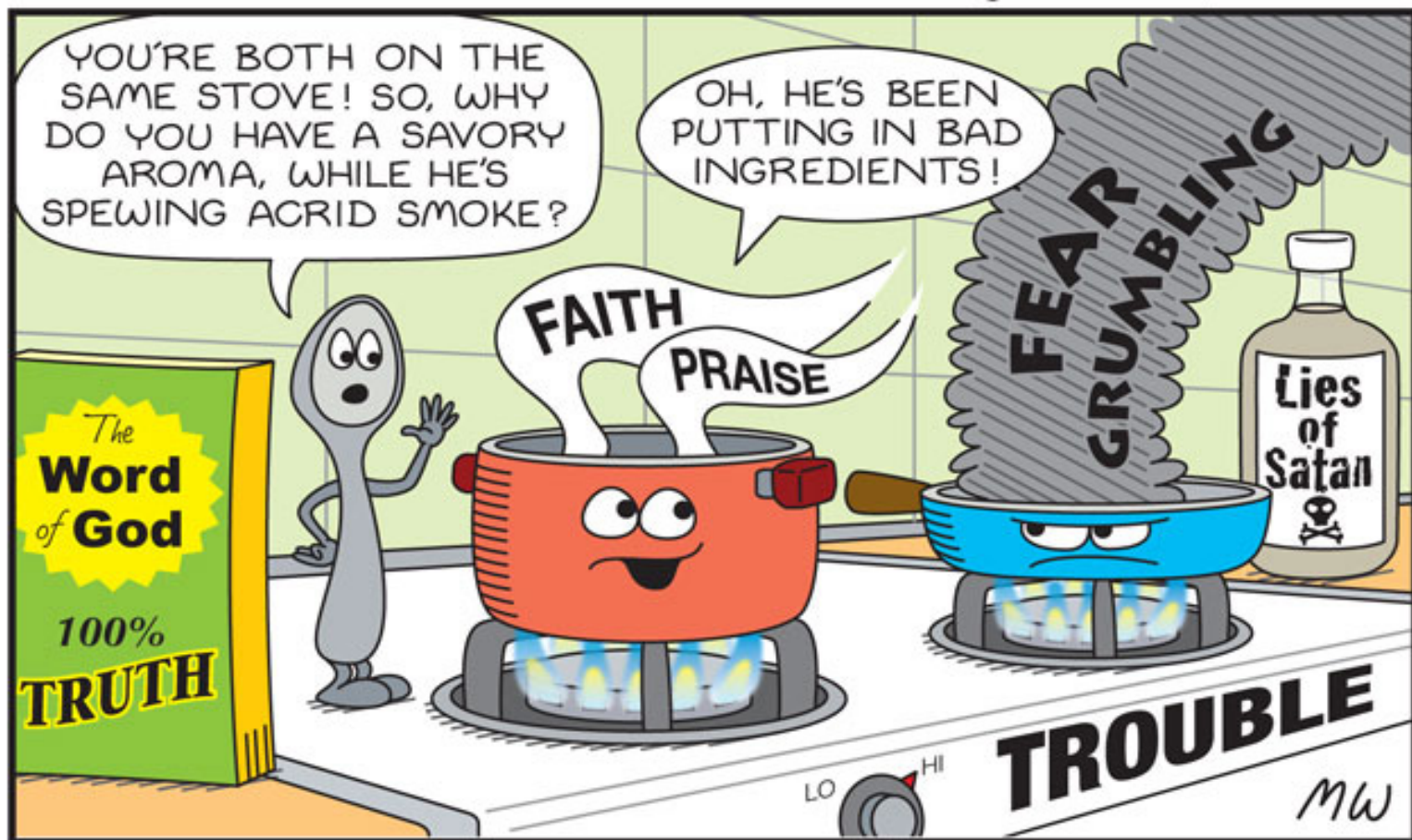
- ~ Am I known as a Christian where I work?
- ~ Is Christ more loved or respected because of the way I live?
- ~ Do I criticize the church and Christians in front of my children?
- ~ Do people know me as one who has Christ in the center of my life?
- ~ Is it possible that I claim to be a Christian and nurse revenge on others?
- ~ Do I find time every day for Bible study?
- ~ Can I work with other people? Can other people work with me?
- ~ Do I have a secret longing to be first? Or can I truly say I do not care who is second, third, or fourth; as long as Jesus is first?
- ~ How can I do a better job of leading others to Christ?
- ~ Have I grown as a Christian in knowledge and service?

As the days roll by this year, may we seek to truly walk with Christ, as well as grow closer to Him.



# WHAT'S COOKING?

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of.

— MATTHEW 12:34 NIV

*If you would like to add an article or announcement to the Hilltopper,  
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