

# **The Hilltopper**



**April 2021**

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## ***From Pastor Mike***

### ***He Is Alive! He Is Alive!!***

I cannot even imagine the joy these words brought to the first disciples. The events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion were a crushing blow. Death was all around them. Yet, on the first day of the week, Good News rang out that the tomb was empty!

At first it was difficult to believe. At first, they did not believe at all. Peter and John ran to the tomb, leaving a distraught Mary wondering what it all meant. She had been the first one there according to the Gospel of John. She had gone back to the disciples to let them know that something was not quite right. The tomb, where they had placed Jesus, was empty!

It was not until Peter went into the tomb and saw that he believed. It was hard. People just did not get up out of graves and take a walk! Usually when someone was placed in a tomb, in the tomb they remained! This was new territory. What did it mean?

It took some time, but the disciples discovered that the resurrection meant a whole new ball game. It was not just the first day of the week; it was the first day of a new creation. Everything that was old was made new. God was at work and nothing, not even death, would stop him.

What does the resurrection mean for us? It is the twenty-first century. The first story of Easter seems so long ago. Life, it seems, is shrouded in death. Sometimes it might even seem like we are on our own and all alone.

Hear the good news! He is risen! He is alive! God's newness has broken into our world and not even death can stop him!

If you are ready to return to in person worship, come and join us! If not, please continue to watch online until you are ready. We miss you but we want everyone to join us in person when it feels right for you. Until then, let us stay connected through the eternal bonds of the Holy Spirit.

May you experience the newness of resurrection and new life as you celebrate the resurrection and life of Jesus! May you discover new growth in discipleship, a renewal of your spirit, and the peace of Christ that is the gift to all who love and serve the Lord!

Yours in Christ.

*Pastor Mike*



The following are the minutes from the **MARCH** 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 - March 25, 2021**

Present: Dallas VanLear, Cindy Sheets, Kevin Armstrong, Karen Whitmer, Wanda Harding, Pastor Mike, Bruce Rogers, Robin Craun and Nathan Kutz.

The meeting was called to order by chairman Dallas VanLear, with devotions and prayer read by Cindy Sheets.

The minutes from the February meeting were accepted as distributed.

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

- ~ Thanked Wanda Harding and Karen Whitmer for their continued efforts in counting the tithes and offerings.
- ~ Corey Johnson will perform our planned internal audit.
- ~ For the last month, Giving has been down from previous months.
- ~ It was recommended that we make our normal payment for apportionments for the month of March.
- ~ Nothing outstanding in the Treasurer's report this month, activities are minimal right now - heating is winding down, etc.

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

- ~ John Morse made a list of projects for the Trustees to work on in the coming months.

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

~ In the last month, the Technical Assistance Manual for local churches to use as a guide for returning to in-person worship has been updated 3 times. The main change is that on April 1st, 2021; we can have 50 people gathering inside for non-worship activities, with continued social-distancing. We can also have envelopes put back in the pews, but no pens or pencils.

~ For Holy Week, it has been decided that we will not serve Holy Communion, hopefully in the summer we can partake in that sacred activity again.

~ We will not have a Maundy Thursday Service this year. We will have a Good Friday Service on Friday, April 2nd at 7:00pm. And on Sunday, April 4th, we will have a Sunrise Service at 7:00am. It will be outdoors for about 30 minutes. We will be able to sing, but we will not have breakfast afterwards. We will also have our Easter Worship Celebration on April 4th starting at 10:30am.

## **Spiritual Nurture:**

~ On Saturday, March 27th at 9:00am, they will be putting together Easter Egg bags for the children of the church and local community. The bags will have candy, eggs and activities in them.

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

~ Pastor Mike announced that Nathan Kutz and Cheryl S. Bennett will take over as co-chairs of the Evangelism Ministry.

## **United Methodist Men:** *(Bruce Rogers)*

~ The UMM have decided on their budget.

~ They discussed some fundraising projects, but nothing is firm at the moment. They may work with the UM Women for some future fundraising projects this year.

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

~ Thank you to everyone for their support of the Emma's Ride project. The family will be receiving their new van next week.

~ The Circle of Hope met on March 1st, with 8 people present. They had a program with the theme of Hope and Denial. They also worked on filling easter eggs for the kids' easter bags. Their next meeting is Monday, April 5th at 7:00pm.

~ The Circle of Love met on March 9th, with 9 people present. They had a program with the theme of Hope and Denial. They also worked on filling easter eggs for the kids' easter bags. They prepared Easter cards to be delivered to residents in local nursing homes as a way of saying that people care about them and are praying for them. Their next meeting is April 13th at 7:00pm.

~ On Saturday, April 24th, there will be breakfast for the homeless at Basic UMC in Waynesboro. This will be a serve and go style breakfast, therefore no one will be able to stay and eat on the premises due to Covid-19 precautions. If you are interested in helping please contact Wanda Harding or Jennifer Strother.

~ May 16th will be United Methodist Women Sunday and will be celebrated with a guest speaker.

~ The UM Women and the UM Men are in talks to work together for some future fundraising projects. They are currently in talks to possibly do a tenderloin dinner in June and split the proceeds for both of their respective mission projects.

### **Membership:** *(Karen Whitmer)*

~ Morene Morris passed away on Tuesday, March 23, 2021.

~ There is some concern about how to reach out to people who have not been back to church since the Covid-19 pandemic shut everything down last year. There was some discussion about how we can reconnect with those people and how we reach out to them and let them know what's been going on; especially those who are not active on social media. Pastor Mike may send out a personal letter to those people.

### **Lay Leader:**

~ The Lay Leader Academy took place this past weekend; and three people from New Hope UMC participated: Samantha Brensinger, Nathan Kutz and Jennifer Strother. Samantha and Nathan completed the basic class and Jennifer completed the spiritual gifts class.

### **New Business:**

~ Robin stated that she really appreciates all of Karen and Wanda's efforts in collecting and counting the tithes and offerings that they have been doing for this past year.

Dallas closed the meeting and Pastor Mike sent us off with a prayer. The meeting ended at 7:17pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Cynthia Sheets  
Recording Secretary

**The next Church Council Meeting will be on Thursday, April 22, 2021 at 6:30pm.**

# Have a Laugh!

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03-02-2015

LIVING WATER HAD A HARD TIME MAKING FRIENDS

## *Little Angel!*

Little Johnny's new baby brother was screaming up a storm.

Johnny asked his mom, "Where'd he come from?"

"He came from heaven, Johnny."

Johnny responded: "Wow! I can see why they threw him out!"

## Donation

Pastor answers the phone.

"Hello, how can I help you today?"

"This is the IRS. Do you know a Ted Jones?"

"I do."

"Is he a member of your congregation?"

"He is."

"Did he donate \$10,000 to the church?"

"He will."



*"All dogs go to Heaven, because we're not the ones who screwed up."*

# Trusting in Something Bigger Than Yourself

“Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit.” The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? “I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” (Jeremiah 17:7-10. ESV)

I think anyone reading this knows what not being able to trust feels like. Whether intentionally or not we have all at some point put our trust in the wrong things. Earlier in Jeremiah 17:5 it says, “Thus says the Lord: “Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord.” I will say I have many times not trusted in God and trusted in all the wrong things. I’m sure if you are honest maybe you have been the same way. But I am here as proof that trusting in Jesus Christ brings real change. These words to you are evidence of trusting in God.

I know you may be thinking I have no clue what you are facing. That there is no way an old religious God is trustworthy enough to bring change to your current life. Maybe you feel you are too hopeless for that. But actually the more hopeless life is, the brighter and warmer God's love is for you. Life has convinced me that even the most lost things can be found. In fact real happiness isn't so without sadness. God has always found whatever I have lost in life.

Last year reminded me not to trust in ourselves. It was truly a year we will all remember, it caught all of us off guard. I found that I was not the tree planted by the water. So many times I was anxious and fearful. Anxious that we or our loved one's would be without basic essentials. Anxious for our protection and especially the protection of all who are weak and vulnerable to this virus. I was fearful and anxious of so many more things. I realized that my heart was sick and like the passage above says, my heart, my tree was not planted through trust in the Lord. But by God's grace and blessing, he replanted me where I should be. Are you planted in something you can without question trust? Something that you know will hold you no matter the storms of this life?

No matter who or where you are or what your belief is, I invite you to trust in God. You can trust in Jesus Christ his son and give him your heart. He will give you water so that you never thirst again. So that your tree always has fruit to bless your loved ones and that no matter the time it will never die. Don't be afraid, but be encouraged.

Thank you and we pray that all of you are blessed,

Nathan Kutz & Cheryl S. Bennett  
*Real Life Heavenly Hands*







# Birthdays & Anniversaries

1 - Margaret Breeding  
- Wanda Harding

3 - Regina Chestnut  
- Bill Shipe

4 - Samantha Arnold  
- Mark Craun  
- Bill Lalla  
- Dale Rankin

5 - Morgan Craun  
- Kindra Kraisser

6 - Lauren Stout Kelly

7 - John Brock  
- Josh Hitt  
- Hailey Johnson  
- Brendan Kraisser  
- Naomi Ritchie



Steve & Terri Carter

9 - Rocky Simmons

10 - Cindy Sheets

13 - Melinda Booth  
- Brittany Killough  
- Desirae Killough  
- Stephen Layman

16 -  Marc & Susan Mehler

17 - Michael Morris

18 - Patty Corbett  
- Kathy Floyd

19 - Michael Huff

20 - Glenna Beard



Bill & Judy Lalla

21 - Lane Bennett

22 - Corey Baldwin  
- David Howdysshell  
- Brenda Pace

23 - Madison Harding

24 - Harlow Bennett  
- Tim Lank  
- Ray Price  
- Judy Riner

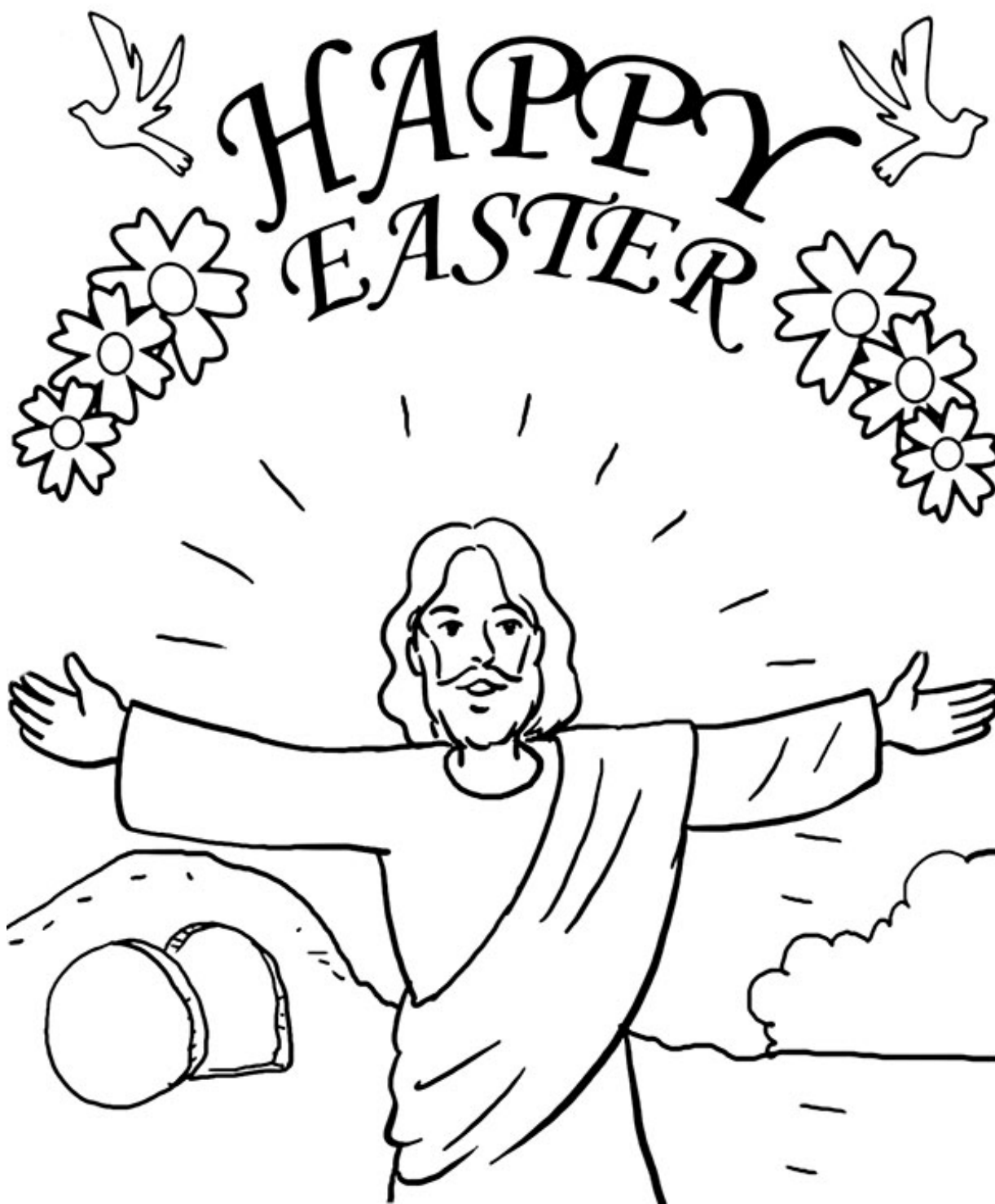
27 - Sherrie Critzer Eacho  
- Peyton Meier  
- Eric Stogdale

28 - Alex Bergman  
- Bette Lowry Blanchard  
- Robert Critzer

30 - Kay Moore  
- Joseph Shreckhise

# Kids' Corner - Jesus Is Alive!

By: LeAnne Guenther



After Jesus died, a man named Joseph (from a place called Arimathea) put Jesus in His tomb that nobody had ever used. The tombs they used then were cut out of rock, almost like a cave, they weren't buried deep in the ground like they are now. Before Joseph left, he and some men rolled a large heavy stone in front of the tomb.

Mary and Mary Magdalene had waited a day to see Jesus because they couldn't go on the Sabbath (which was a day of rest). They made spices and oils as a sign of respect to Jesus and went very early Sunday morning to go see Jesus' body.

As they were just about at the tomb, the earth suddenly shook and an

angel came down from heaven. He easily rolled away the stone at the entrance of the tomb and sat on top of it.

The women looked at each other and rubbed their eyes since they couldn't believe what they had seen -- plus it was very early in the morning, and they were still a little sleepy. The angel was so bright -- almost as bright as lightning! His clothes were as white as snow.

There had been guards watching the tomb so no one would steal Jesus' body. When they saw the angel, they fell over and they couldn't move or speak because they were so afraid.



Then the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid. I know you are looking for Jesus who has died. But He isn't here; He has risen just as He said He would! Come and see for yourself, the tomb is empty."

The women were confused. How could this happen? They were sure Jesus had died, and now He was alive? They looked in the tomb and the cloths Jesus had been wrapped in were lying on the ground; the tomb was empty. Then the angel spoke again, "If you want to find Jesus He's on his way to Galilee."

So the women hurried away, They were laughing and crying at the same time. They didn't know what to feel; they had been so sad that Jesus was dead and now they were so excited that He was alive! They just knew they had to find Jesus, and they had to tell the disciples the good news.

As they were running down the path, they turned a corner, and there was Jesus. "Greetings," He said. The ladies fell at His feet and worshiped him. Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my disciples to come to Galilee. That is where they will see me."

The disciples came to Galilee, having heard by this time that Jesus was alive. They were sitting around talking about it when Jesus walked into the room and said to them, "Peace be with you."

The disciples immediately stopped talking. Even though they had heard He was alive, they were shocked to see Him standing there with them.

Jesus said to them, "Why do you look at me like you've just seen a ghost? Why don't you believe what you're seeing? Look at the scars in my hands and feet. It is really me! Touch me and see, I am not a ghost but a real person."

The disciple's mouths were open in amazement because they still didn't know what to think. They were so full of joy, and yet it was so impossible. Jesus understood what they were thinking, so He said, "This is what I told you would happen, that everything must happen that has already been written in the Bible."

Jesus had told the disciples when they had the Last Supper together; they took the bread at communion and Jesus said, "this is my body which I have given to you..." but the disciples hadn't understood what it really meant.

Then Jesus told them, "You have seen these things that have happened, so stay in the city and soon I am going to give you what God has promised you: the Holy Spirit.

When we become Christians, Jesus automatically gives us the Holy Spirit to live inside of us. The Holy Spirit makes us know when we have done something wrong. We might feel sick to our stomach, or just get a bad feeling but that is the Holy Spirit reminding us that we are doing something wrong, or that we need to stop and say sorry and ask for forgiveness for what we've done.

The story is almost done, but Jesus had one more person to see. His name was Thomas, and he was one of the disciples that wasn't there when Jesus met with them. Thomas had also heard that Jesus was alive, but would not believe until he saw Jesus with his own eyes.

A week later when Thomas finally saw Jesus, Jesus said to him, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Stop doubting and believe." But Jesus continued, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; but it is more amazing for those who don't see me, and believe anyway."

It's really neat, but Jesus was actually talking to us when He said this. If you believe in Him, without seeing Him, He will think you're very special! That is exactly what faith is: believing in God even though you can't see Him.



## *Sermons by Phone*

**Hear Pastor Mike's  
Weekly Sermon**

**1-877-369-1437**

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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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