

The Hilltopper



April 2022

From Pastor Mike

As spring blooms, the sun warms and all of creation seems to be bursting back into life, Easter reminds us that in the great symphony of the cosmos, all creation sings in harmony with God's great plan for humanity: *Resurrection to eternal life!*

We were made for this, for life never-ending – God designed us for bliss, and for heroism; God made us for worship and for devotion! And on Easter, as we pause and listen deeply to the hum within our very souls, we are reminded again that this is true: We were made to be his children, in his world.

Jesus came and joined our flesh. He lived and loved among us, but we did not esteem him and counted him stricken. On him was laid the iniquity of us all, and guess what, he accepted it, bore it, died under it, and broke it. And because he died and rose again, we have this promise: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have everlasting life. *Everlasting life. Never-ending, everlasting life!*

That is worthy of our celebrations.

Look at what we have planned for Holy Week and Easter!

Holy Week at New Hope!

Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10th

9:30am - Sunday School

10:30am - Worship

Community Good Friday Service, April 15th

7:00pm at Laurel Hill Baptist Church

Message by the Rev. Kathleen Michael (Middle River COB)

Easter Sunday, April 17th

6:30am - Sunrise Service

7:00am - Sunrise Breakfast

9:30am - Sunday School

10:30am - Easter Worship Service

11:30am - Easter Egg Hunt and Scavenger Hunt

We look forward to celebrating Easter week with you and your families. Our Community Good Friday and Easter services are wonderful opportunities to reach out and invite neighbors, friends, and family to join us.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Mike

Easter Sunday - April 17th, 2022

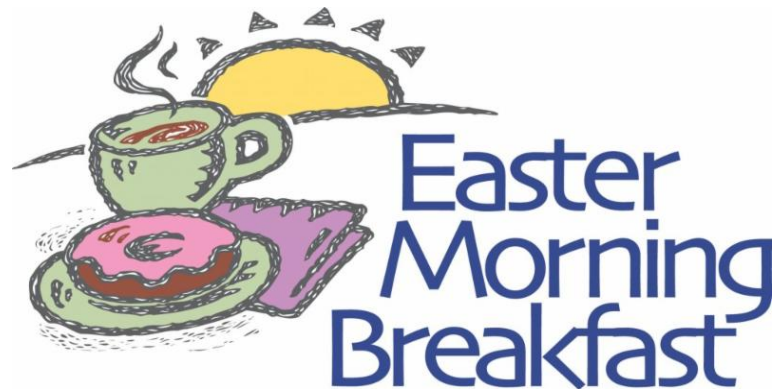


Easter Sunrise Service

Sunday, April 17th @ 6:30am

Easter Morning Breakfast

Sunday, April 17th @ 7:00am



Easter Worship Service

Sunday, April 17th @ 10:30am

(Following Sunday School at 9:30am)

Easter Egg & Scavenger Hunts

after Worship Service



SURRENDER WHERE YOU'RE PLANTED

by: Kole Farney

Early in the summer as I was leaving my Dad's farm I noticed a grouping of small plants near the edge of the cornfield close by the house. In an area about the size of a tennis court, the plants were all about half the size of the plants that covered the rest of the field. To a farmer, this kind of variation on such a small scale is nothing to be worried about because the field will yield just fine even if that small area doesn't produce as much. But if the stunted corn plants could talk and feel like they do on Veggie Tales, you better believe that *they* would be worried!

"Why is this so hard?" "Why did the farmer plant me here?" "Will I ever grow?" "Ugh, this ground is so rocky and dry, how does the farmer expect me to bear any fruit?"

Maybe you have the same questions. Maybe your life has been one big disappointment this week, or this year. You may even think that if you could just find success, then you would find happiness, but what you are really longing for is *surrender*.



The Problem of Concern in Corinth

"Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches" (1 Cor 7:17). Paul wrote these words to a group of people that just couldn't wait to modify their lives. Some wanted to change their ethnic classification (18), some wanted to be free (21), and others wished to get married (25). The problem was not that these desires were bad.

In fact, Paul advocated for marriage (38) and for freedom from slavery (21) - the problem was the overriding concern for a different situation than the Corinthians had fallen into.

They had bought into the lie that if they just focused enough on themselves and what they needed to do to change their circumstance, they would be satisfied. And this problem of concern wasn't limited to them! Paul said that his directive to find contentment in the life sovereignly assigned by God was a rule in *all the churches*. In all the churches of the 1st Century world that Paul knew of, he said, "In whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God" (24).

The Bible is saying that just as the farmer decides where the seeds are planted, so God calls people to Christ in the midst of life situations that he has assigned. This means that God's responsibility is the assigning of the circumstance that you are in, and your responsibility is to surrender to his calling right where you're planted.

Remaining with God ~ This is an invitation to a brand-new way of living! A life *with* God. It is the difference of Christianity - that we humans, though sinful and failing, are meant to be with God.

If God is with me right down in the difficulty and disappointment, what else do I need? If he is with me in my inadequacies, why do I need better qualifications? If Christ himself is by my side in singleness, why am I so concerned with a spouse? If my Jesus who suffered for me holds my hand in distress, what comfort am I waiting for?

The secret to life isn't a success, it's surrender. It isn't in a modified circumstance, but in contentment right where you are.

And if you learn this, little by little, you will enjoy Jesus more and more and you will declare with great power, even in your weakness, that the God who is with you never fails.



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 24, 2022

Present: Kevin Armstrong, Bianca Brensinger, Samantha Breninger, Alicia Copeland, Cindy Deavers, Pastor Mike, Cindy Sheets, Jennifer Strother, Dallas VanLear, Wanda Harding, and Karen Whitmer

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

The minutes from the March meeting were accepted as distributed.

Finance Report: *(Kevin Armstrong reported)*

- So far through March, we are not doing as well as we had hoped. Hopefully, we are just in a bad cycle for now, and things will even out. We are cautiously optimistic, but staying the course.
- Kevin recommended that we pay 75% of our apportionments for the month, but we may have to change things in the future.
- Susan Mehler has agreed to perform our annual audit this year.

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

- Nothing has really changed much since last month.
- \$1,496 in offerings (for this past Sunday) has not been reported on the most recent treasurer's report.
- \$2,727 has been paid for propane this season.
- A new credit card came in for the Trustees. The question was raised about whether we should remove Teresa Barr from the credit card and add Mitch Brensinger to the card, since he is our new Trustees chairperson, and for security reasons. There was some discussion. And Kevin made a motion to get a new card with Mitch's name on it, once we receive the new card, we should cancel the card with Teresa's name on it. Karen seconded it and it was agreed unanimously.

Trustees: *(report from Mitch Brensinger)*

- Discuss paint peeling off walls in the basement. Mitch will scrape and repaint.
- The microwave at the parsonage was missing a couple of screws on the door.
- Daryl Deavers fixed it and also a burner on the stove was not working properly and a part was ordered for that.
- Looking at shopping around for propane to try to save some money.

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

- Working on reorganizing - the acolytes, the scripture readers on Sunday morning, the nursery workers and those delivering the children's message. Anyone interested in volunteering in any of these areas, should contact Pastor Mike. We are hoping to at least have the acolytes ready to go for Easter Sunday.
- Our 6-week Bible Study has been going well, with about 12 people participating between the afternoon and evening sessions.
- Planning on having an Easter Sunrise Service at 6:30am. With an Easter Breakfast to follow at 7:00am. And our regular schedule will continue the morning with Sunday School at 9:30am and Worship at 10:30am.
- Next Tuesday, Pastor Mike will be meeting with our 5 community churches to discuss the Community Good Friday Service we plan to have together at Laurel Hill on Friday, April 15th at 7:00pm.
- Mike introduced a Resolution Letter, so that Samantha Brensinger and Cindy Sheets can be added to the Youth Account at the Dupont Community Credit Union. Dana Breeding and Roger Aldizer's names will be removed from the account. Pastor Mike made a motion for this resolution to pass, Dallas seconded and it was approved unanimously.

Spiritual Nurture: *(Samantha Brensinger reported)*

- We are going to *hop* right into Easter - planning on having an Easter Egg Hunt for the kids, and a Scavenger Hunt for the Youth, with a prize at the end of the hunt. We will be asking for donations of Easter eggs, baskets and treats. We will need at least 6 easter baskets.
 - The question was raised whether or not to have the Easter Egg Hunt and the Scavenger Hunt during Sunday School or after Worship, as we have in the past. There was much discussion about the timing of the hunts, and all opinions will be taken into consideration.

Evangelism: *(report from Nathan Kutz)*

- For 2-3 weeks, starting sometime in April, we will be collecting socks, underwear and earplugs for the Valley Mission. More information will be forthcoming.

United Methodist Men: *(Dallas Van Lear reported)*

- Their last meeting was Thursday evening with a meal by the United Methodist Women. A program with the organization: Renewing Homes for Greater Augusta was presented by two representatives from the all-volunteer organization. They fix homes and do small repairs for those who can't physically do the repairs themselves, and/or who are on a limited budget. They also steer those people to other local organizations, if they need assistance in other areas. On average each year, the RHGA helps 117 people in 35 homes throughout the Valley.
- The UMW also discussed the Easter Sunrise Breakfast that they are hosting, and the Men's Worship Service coming up on Mother's Day.
- Also, they will be having a Workday on Saturday, April 2nd in the morning.

United Methodist Women: *(Wanda Harding reported)*

- The UMW held its first meeting of 2022 on Monday, March 21st, with 12 ladies present. Pastor Mike presented a program on healing, along with a healing service. Plans were discussed for having a Women's Sunday on Father's Day, and possible Ladies Retreat in May, as well as meal plans for the UMM in April.
- March is Women in History Month
- The United Methodist Women (UMW) is renamed: United Women in Faith
- On Monday, April 4th @ 7:00pm - the Circle of Hope meets
- On Tuesday, April 5th @ 1:30pm - the Sisters of Faith meets
- On Tuesday, April 12th @ 7:00pm - the Circle of Love meets
- On Thursday, April 21st @ 6:30pm - the UMW will serve a meal to the UMM

Staff/Parish Relations: *(Pastor Mike reported)*

- The next meeting will be in May.

Membership: *(Karen Whitmer reported)*

- No changes, nothing new to report.

Lay Leader: *(Jennifer Strother reported)*

- Thanked Pastor Mike for encouraging more Laity participation in the Worship service.

Communications: *(Cindy Sheets reported)*

- Hanging ceiling microphones for the congregation are currently selling for around \$150 each, which would not include any cost of labor that we may incur for installation.

Youth: *(Bianca Brensinger reported)*

- As of the time of this report, the youth have 116 Chocolate Easter Egg orders, totaling over 270 chocolate and peanut butter easter eggs to be made on Friday, April 1st, and will be ready for pick-up on Sunday, April 3rd.

New Business: *(Pastor Mike reported)*

- General Conference has been postponed again this year until 2024. It was decided that not all delegates would be able to attend from all countries due to having time to get covid vacations, and/or visas to travel to the U.S. A virtual option would not have been possible, due to some delegates not having access to reliable internet access, and the fact that they are in different time zones across the world.
 - Pastor Mike recommended that we don't move forward with any decisions until the bishop gives us some kind of protocol to follow. Following that, we would then need a 2/3 vote from the membership to make a final decision on staying with or leaving the UMC.
- For Easter Worship ~ Alicia reported that she will have an Easter Choir and Handbells perform.

Dallas ended the meeting by thanking everyone for coming and performing their duties. Thinks things are going well for our church. Pastor Mike sent us off with prayer. The meeting ended at 7:29pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Cynthia Sheets
Recording Secretary

The next Church Council Meeting will be on Thursday, April 28th, 2022 at 6:30pm.



Easter Egg Hunt & Scavenger Hunt

Sunday, April 17th ~ Following Easter Worship Services



We will have an Easter Egg Hunt for the kids *and* a Scavenger Hunt for the youth right after Easter Worship on Sunday, April 17th.

Please plan to join us for these egg-citing fun activities for kids of all ages!

When All Signs Point To NO

How many times in life have you had a door open only to be shut in your face soon after? Or constantly had obstacles to overcome or hurdles to jump? Or climb and conquer a hill only to have a mountain rise up in its place? I'm sure at some point in your life you have felt constantly knocked down every time you try to get up and keep going. We all experience different circumstances and trials. We may begin to question everything and wonder why me, haven't I had enough to deal with, or will this ever end. Sometimes, when you think things are starting to get positive or go your way, you may even experience another setback.

Life can be tough... sometimes it may seem like weeks, months, even years where nothing goes your way and all signs point to no. This can make one want to give up, throw their arms in the air and say, "That's it, I'm not going to try anymore... I'm done!" The problem comes because we think nothing can change, nothing good will ever come about in certain situations, or we should just give up entirely. However, when we get to that point in life we are actually exactly where God wants us to be.

"Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing. If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him. But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways. Blessed is the man who remains steadfast under trial, for when he has stood the test he will receive the crown of life, which God has promised to those who love him." (James 1: 2-8, 12 ESV)

It's pretty easy to daily routine. Find a time that and talk to God. It's also help when you are knocked given it all to God? I'm not guidance. I'm talking about absolutely can not handle the on. This is when you have to Let go and let God. This can be very difficult to do. To ultimately surrender it all to our Heavenly Father. But, this is what God wants you to do. He wants you to let go of your challenges, troubles, and burdens and lay it all on him.



not suppose that he will receive double-minded man, unstable man who remains steadfast stood the test he will receive the promised to those who love

incorporate prayer into your is set aside in the day to reflect somewhat easy to ask God for down. But, have you ever just talking about just asking for his being so down in life that you situation anymore. You can't go give it all to him... on your knees.

Remember, God is our Heavenly Father and therefore we should go to him just like we do our Earthly fathers. So, if you find yourself telling your father what challenges you are facing, you need to do the same with God. He wants us to come to him. He wants to help guide us and point us in the right direction. He wants us to give it all to him... everything, no matter how big or small. He wants to help us jump over the hurdles, climb mountains as large as Everest, and show us the signs that point to yes.

It's true sometimes life is so challenging. But, don't get frustrated, don't feel defeated, and don't give up! Instead, remember that no matter what you experience in life God always has your back. Remember to let go and let God. Give it all to Him and trust in him completely. Surrender everything to him because he knows our whole story, not just the page we are stuck on.

Thank you and we pray that all of you are blessed,
Nathan & Cheryl Kutz
Real Life Heavenly Hands

Just For Laughs ~ A Few Little Easter Yolks



When does Valentine's Day come after Easter?

In the dictionary!

Why are people tired in April?

Because they just finished a March.

What happens when you crack a bad joke at school on Easter?

You get egg-spelled!

Did you hear about the house infested with Easter eggs?

They needed an eggs-terminator!

Why should you never tickle an Easter egg?

It might crack up!

Why did the Easter egg hide?

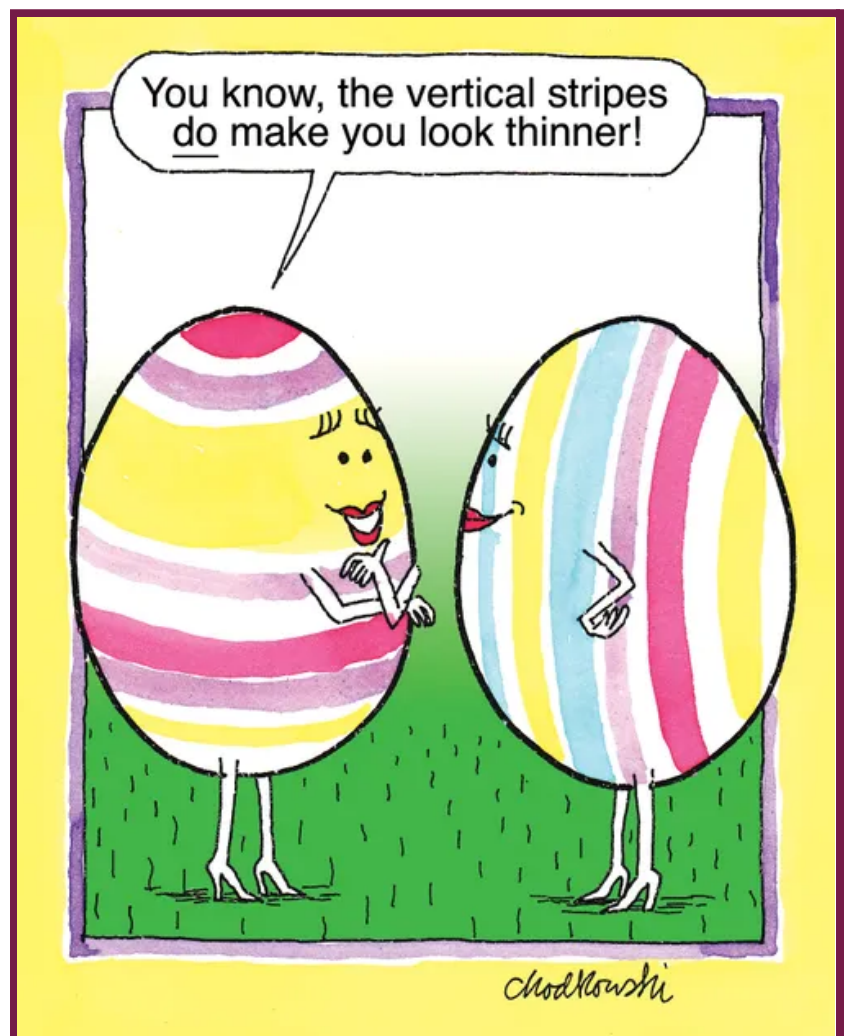
It was a little chicken.

What is the Easter Bunny's favorite kind of music?

Hip-hop!

What do you call a rabbit with fleas?

Bugs Bunny!



In the absence of President Kim Maugans, Vice President, Corey Johnson conducted the meeting. There were 12 members and 2 guests present. Jim Davis, Darryl Deavers, Jeff Hitt, Corey Johnson, Jarman Fretwell, Kenny Fretwell, Bill Lalla, John Morse, Pastor Mike Reaves, Bruce Rogers, Jack Walker and Dallas VanLeer. Devotions were provided by Pastor Mike Reaves. A wonderful meal was served by the ladies from Circle of Love.



PROGRAM: The program was presented by Sharon Coplai, Executive Director of Renewing Homes of Greater Augusta (RHGA) and Carolyn Moore-Ford. RHGA was formerly known as

Rebuilding Together Greater Augusta. The mission of RHGA is to accomplish, at no cost to the homeowner, critical home repairs and modifications for low-income elderly, disabled, or disadvantaged homeowners living in Staunton, Waynesboro or Augusta County. They are mostly a volunteer organization completing 45 to 50 projects a year, averaging \$500 to \$2,500 for each project. Funding is mostly donations and some grants.

MINUTES: The minutes for the last scheduled meeting on February 17, 2022 had been sent to all members for their review. There being no questions, the minutes were approved as submitted.

TREASURER'S REPORT: The Treasurer's Report was given by Kenny Fretwell. It includes all expenses and revenue since our last meeting. A copy of his report is part of these minutes.

(Checking): \$1,186.29 + (Savings): \$2,224.35 = **TOTAL: \$ 3,410.64**

OLD BUSINESS:

- Corey Johnson will continue to develop programs of interest to our members.
- The Revenue Committee of Jack Walker, Bill Lalla, Darryl Deavers and Kim Maugans met after our February meeting. They discussed options for fundraising. The Committee wants to include representatives from the UMW because any events will probably need to include the women of the church. Susan Mehler agrees the UMW should be involved. The Committee will meet again in the coming weeks.

NEW BUSINESS:

- There was a discussion about UMM Sunday and when we should do it. A motion was made (Dallas Vanleer/John Morse) and approved to designate Mother's Day, May 8, as UMM Sunday. Bruce Rogers volunteered to coordinate the program. He will contact George Taylor about presenting the message.
- Pastor Mike Reaves announced there would be an Easter Sunrise Service on April 17. He asked if UMM wanted to host a breakfast following the early morning service. After some discussion, a motion was made (Bill Lalla/Dallas Vanleer) and approved to host a Pancake Breakfast following the service. Dallas Vanleer volunteered to coordinate the activities for the breakfast.
- Pastor Mike Reaves expressed concern for the limbs that have fallen during the winter and are scattered throughout the parsonage yard. The discussion included the normal cleanup and mulching the flower beds UMM does during the summer months. After some discussion, it was recommended to do a cleanup of the parsonage yard and mulch the church flower beds on Saturday, April 2. April 9 will be a bad weather alternative. Darryl Deavers volunteered to coordinate the cleanup.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned after a prayer by Pastor Mike Reaves.

Respectfully prepared and submitted by Bruce Rogers, Secretary.

NEXT MEETING: 6:30 PM, Thursday, April 21, 2022.



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 Howdyshell
- Brenda Pace

23 - Madison Harding

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

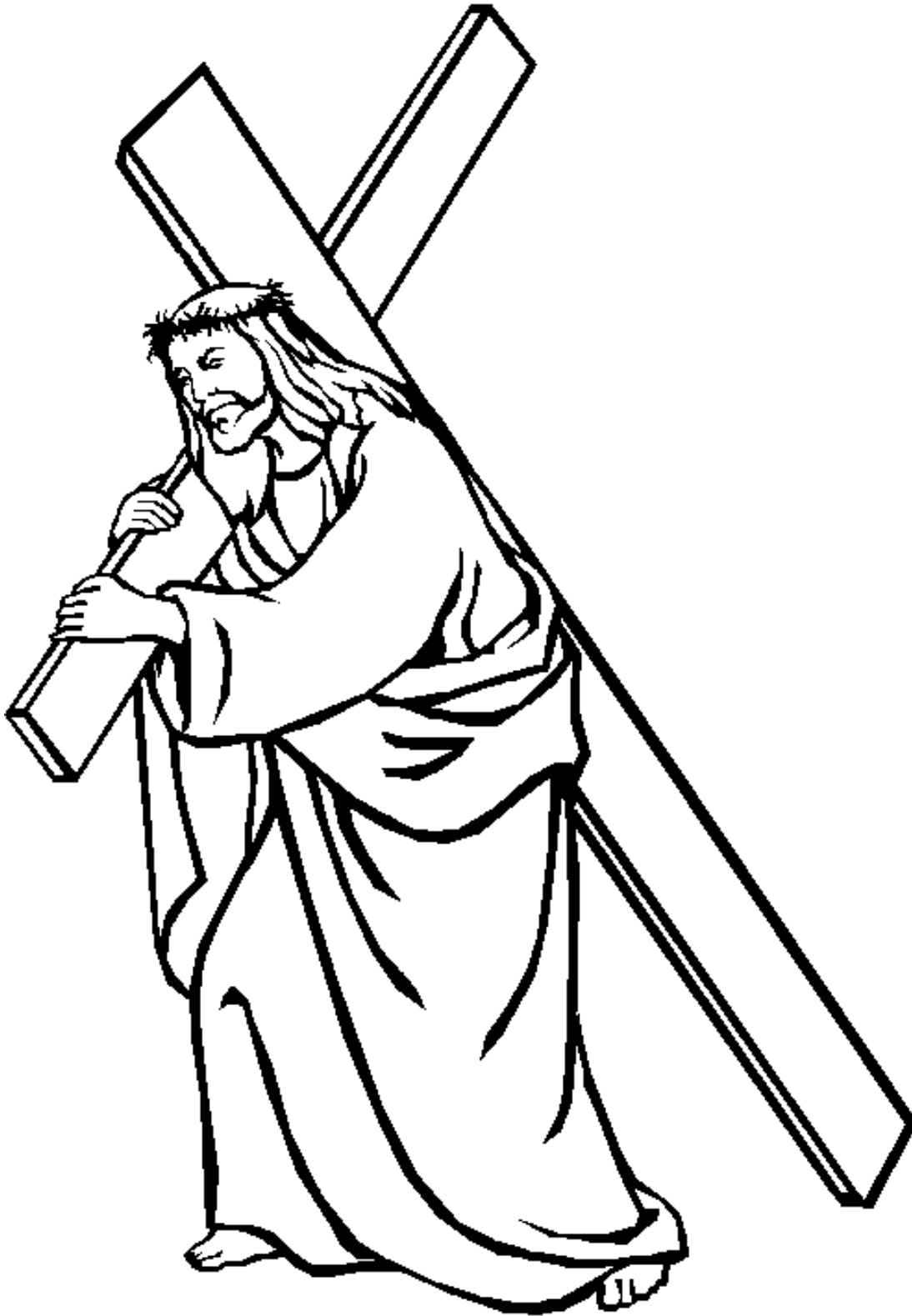
27 - Sherrie Critzer Eacho
- Peyton Meier

28 - Alex Bergman
- Bette Lowry Blanchard
- Robert Critzer

30 - Kay Moore
- Joseph Shreckhise

Kids' Corner - Jesus Dies On The Cross

By: Sharla Guenther



Very early in the morning, the soldiers brought Jesus to Pilate, the governor at the time. Pilate asked Jesus, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

Jesus replied, "Yes, I am."

This upset the chief priests because they were jealous of him and the Jewish friends He had made.

Pilate listened to the complaints of the people that brought Jesus, but he couldn't find any reason to punish Him. Pilate questioned Jesus, but Jesus didn't stick up for himself (He knew that they wouldn't listen anyway). He had done nothing wrong.

Pilate called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people. He said to them, "I have talked to Jesus, and I find no reason to kill Him."

After they heard that, all the people shouted, "We want Jesus! Release Barabbas instead!" Barabbas had been in jail because he had killed someone, and the people wanted him to be free, and Jesus to be punished. (It sounds strange but it was like peer pressure.

The chief priests went around telling people lies about Jesus, so that they would be afraid of Him, and would want to kill Him).

Pilate didn't like this one bit. He wanted to let Jesus go, so he tried to talk to the people but they didn't let him. They just kept shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!"

Pilate tried again, yelling, "What has Jesus done wrong? I can punish Him but then I must let Him go, He doesn't deserve to die!" But the people just shouted louder to crucify Jesus and Pilate wanted to please the crowd so he freed Barabbas and sent Jesus to die.

The soldiers led Jesus into the palace and made Him put on an old royal robe and they twisted together a crown of thorns to put on His head. Then they made fun of Him and said, "Hail, king of the Jews." They didn't understand that He was a king; that's why they made fun of Him.

Next, the soldiers led Jesus toward a hill called Golgotha. They made Him carry the cross on His back, but because Jesus couldn't carry it the whole way, He fell down. The soldiers had whipped His back and it hurt so much that Jesus couldn't handle the weight of the cross on His shoulders.

A man named Simon happened to be near Jesus when He fell, and the soldiers grabbed him, and made him carry the cross the rest of the way. The soldiers offered Jesus wine mixed with myrrh. This was supposed to help make it less painful, but Jesus refused to have any.

When they reached the top of the hill, they nailed Jesus to the cross. There were three crosses: Jesus was in the middle, there was a criminal on His right, and on His left. Pilate made a sign to be put on the cross. It read what He was being punished for Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.

The soldiers watched Jesus and made fun of Him; they even divided up His clothes to be even more meaningful. Some people walked by and shouted, "You saved others, why can't you save Yourself?" Jesus could have saved himself, but he chose not to. He wanted to save us instead.

Jesus ignored the people, but He did see His mother, His aunt, and some other women He knew. Jesus felt bad for His mother, she was so sad to see her son die (just like your parents feel when you get hurt).

Then Jesus saw one of His disciples close to His mother, and He said, "Mother here is your son, and friend here is your mother." Jesus couldn't say too much for he was very weak. But He wanted His friend, the disciple, to be like a son to His mother and take care of her. And from that day on, the disciple did.

Later, Jesus could not handle the pain any longer and He said, "It is finished." That is when Jesus bowed His head and went to Heaven.

Suddenly, a huge curtain that hung at the temple was torn in half, from top to bottom. And a man that had wanted Jesus to die saw all of this and he said, "Surely this man was the Son of God!"

He realized he had been wrong about Jesus.

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It seems like a really sad story, but it's one of the greatest stories of all! Jesus died knowing that you would do things wrong (*that is what sin is*) -- things that you're not supposed to -- not obeying your parents, saying something mean to your sister or brother, or not telling the truth. He knew what you would do when He died so many years ago. Jesus died for **everybody's** sins, so now when we ask God to forgive us, and we are truly sorry for what we've done, He will act like it never happened. That's right He forgets what we did! Now that doesn't mean we should ever make the same mistake again, because by doing that it's like we're hurting Jesus all over again.

So, next time you do something you're not supposed to, remember to say sorry to Jesus, and remember what He did for you!

***"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son,  
that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)***

# He is Risen

DEATH COULD NOT HOLD HIM.

Rejoice in the resurrection of

*Jesus Christ.*



WISHING YOU A BLESSED AND JOY FILLED EASTER!

*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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