

# The Hilltopper



**August 2021**

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## *From Pastor Mike*

There was once a man who lost everything. He was a farmer and lost all his livestock. He had many children, and he lost them as well. He even lost what good health he had left. He lost everything. Despite all these losses, despite all these hardships, this man had the most unique, faith-filled response I've ever heard. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there; the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job 1:21) This man, Job, did lose a lot. At the same time, though, Job rested his life in the hands of God trusting God to carry him through it all.

I doubt most of us would respond the same way Job did. Maybe we would, maybe at certain times we could, but I must admit, it may be challenging for us to say "blessed be the name of the Lord" when we are facing serious challenges. That may not be our natural response, but it could be. In the face of loss, disease, and death, what comfort will we find in fury, or anger, or pain? Wouldn't it be much better to rest ourselves in the hands of God?

What Job went through always strikes me. Few of us will ever suffer such complete losses like Job did, although some of us will face similar situations. The question for us though is this, "How will you react when those times do come?" We could allow our grief in this world to swallow us alive, sapping our love for others, sucking out our will to live, crumbling our desires to even enjoy life. Thanks to Christ, though, the opposite could occur. Instead of folding inward upon ourselves and our grief, we could fall back into the arms of our loving God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, and the redeemer of all creation.

There is a hymn entitled "Be Still, My Soul" (UMH 534) which does an excellent job guiding us into those loving arms of our God. When faced with loss, with physical pain and with death, the hymnist says this in the first verse:

*Be still, my soul: the Lord is on your side.  
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;  
Leave to your God to order and provide;  
In every change God faithful will remain.  
Be still, my soul; your best, your heavenly Friend  
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.*

Pains in this life will come. That is an unfortunate promise. The question, though, is this, "Where will you go when those pains come?" Thanks be to God we have a loving Savior in Jesus Christ who invites us to come to Him.

Yours in Christ.

*Pastor Mike*



# Vacation Bible School 2021





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The following are the minutes from the **JULY** 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 - July 22, 2021**

Present: Kevin Armstrong, Samantha Brensinger, Alicia Copeland, Robin Craun, Wanda Harding, Pastor Mike, Bruce Rogers, Cindy Sheets, Jennifer Strother and Dallas VanLear

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

The minutes from the June meeting were accepted as distributed.

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

- ~ Keeping an eye on the income from our tithes and offerings.
- ~ We can make apportionments for this month.
- ~ Budgets are due from all committee heads by August 1st.
- ~ Next Finance Committee meeting is August 19th at 6:30pm.

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

- ~ We were over budget on our insurance.
- ~ We are good with our bills for this month.
- ~ Administrative and Technology is over budget, due to not calculating the website expenses for the year.



*(Robin Craun - Finance Secretary)*

~ There is a \$125 donation given for Vacation Bible School for food. Any leftover money should go to purchasing school supplies.

~ Robin and Cindy Sheets counted the money on July 11th. Robin stated that she still needed counters for the third Sundays of the month. Wanda stated that she and Karen Whitmer would continue to help count on the third Sundays of the month.

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

~ The Trustees met a few weeks ago, they got their budget done and submitted it to Kevin.

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

~ PRG (Post-Covid Re-entry Group) met last night. Holy Communion will continue as we did it on July 4th.

~ We were hoping to get Sunday School restarted on August 15th for all. But, some of the teachers are not ready to restart back yet with the new teaching format, so we will reassess where we stand after the children go back to school for a few weeks and we will see where we are then.

~ The Seeker's class will restart their class on August 1st.

~ The G.I.F.T. class will temporarily move into the social hall, and Bianca Brensinger will help supervise any children that come with their parents with activities, games, coloring pages, stories, etc.

~ We will have Kids' Rock restart again during worship on August 15th, we will hold Kids' Rock in the social hall. We will plan to have 4-10 kids in Kids' Rock with at least 2 adults leading the class.

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

~ This committee needs to be reinstated. PRG will focus on this for now.

### **Spiritual Nurture Report:** *(Samantha Brensinger)*

~ Vacation Bible School 2021 is tomorrow. Thanks to everyone for all of their help and donations.



## **Youth Report:** *(Bianca Brensinger)*

- ~ Looking to have a Youth Bowling Event soon, date TBD.
- ~ The Youth may want to go to the Praise in the Park Rock Night on August 31st at Gypsy Hill Park.

## **Evangelism:** *(Nathan Kutz)*

- ~ They have delivered baskets to a number of people and will deliver the remaining to nursing homes when able to get in.
- ~ They are working on preparing some first time visitor follow-up procedures.

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

- ~ They will prepare hot dogs and snacks after the service to close out Vacation Bible School 2021.
- ~ They may work it out with the Ruritans to run the dump one week a month, in order to earn \$300 per month. This would help them supplement some of the money that they are not earning from HOTS for their missions projects.

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

- ~ Their next meeting is August 16th at 7:00pm in the Social Hall, this will be a combined meeting of all the circles. It is undetermined if they will have a speaker or not.

## **Staff / Parish Relations Committee:** *(Pastor Mike)*

- ~ They met in June for their annual Pastor evaluation.
- ~ The Parsonage inspection will be either August 3rd or August 4th, with the Trustees.
- ~ They will need to meet again to finalize salaries for 2022.

## **Membership:** *(Pastor Mike)*

- ~ Since last month, we lost our brother in Christ - Charlie Bill Fretwell.
- ~ We also gained 2 new members, Ronnie and Doris Broce.



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

- ~ There will be no lay speaker training until at least September.
  - ~ Everyone is invited to come join the G.I.F.T. (Growing In Faith Together) Sunday School class, starting on August 15th. We will be focusing on Spiritual Gifts.
  - ~ You can read Jennifer's Spiritual Ramblings on facebook at: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/225977082528728/>
- You do not need to sign up for facebook or be a member, since it is a public group, everyone can read her Spiritual Ramblin's for free.

## **Communication:** *(Cindy Sheets)*

- ~ We will have to update our Microsoft Office subscription soon. Which will probably cost around \$70 for the year.

## **Unfinished Business:**

- ~ The back tv monitor is currently being looked at to see if it can be repaired by Kevin Armstrong and Jeff Hitt.
- ~ The electric outlet in the GIFT class needs to be looked at by the Trustees, it has been damaged.
- ~ We need to make sure that the Scouts are leaving before we move them out of the old social hall. It is unclear at this time whether they are staying or not.

## **New Business:**

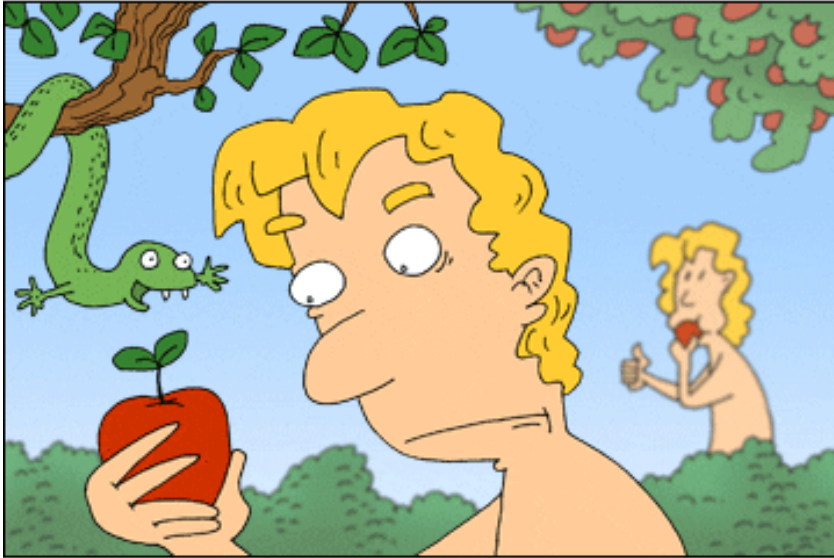
- ~ Wanda stated that The Seeker's will restart their Sunday School class on August 1st with "The Walk" video by Adam Hamilton. They will be having discussions based on this video and everyone is welcome to come join them.

Dallas thanked everyone for doing their part to put together and make our church run and be successful. Pastor Mike sent us off with a prayer. The meeting ended at 7:15pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Cynthia Sheets  
Recording Secretary

**The next Church Council Meeting will be on Thursday, August 26, 2021 at 6:30pm.**





Thanks to Jeremy (See Genesis 3) 10-13-2008

EVERY SINGLE PERSON IN THE WORLD HAS TRIED IT BUT YOU!

The Sunday School teacher was describing that when Lot's wife looked back at Sodom she turned into a pillar of salt, when Bobby interrupted. "My mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced, "and she turned into a telephone pole."

After explaining the commandment to honor your father and mother, a Sunday School teacher asked her class if there was a commandment that teaches us how to treat our brothers and sisters.

One boy, the oldest in his family, immediately answered, "Thou shalt not kill."






# Birthdays & Anniversaries

**1** - Justin Duncan  
- Taylor Meier

**2** -  Winton & Ava Funk

**3** - Lewis Whitmer  
-  Tim & Amye Bergman

**5** - Michael Harner

**7** - John Dejong  
- Susan Mehler

**8** - Kent Darrah  
- Charles Powers

**9** - Monique Houser

**10** - Amy Corbin  
- Catherine Taylor

**11** - Robert Carr  
- Carolyn Fretwell  
- Weston Powell

**12** - Greg Killough  
- Savannah Ritchie  
- Alice Ward

**13** - Mary Taylor  
- Linda Wheatley



**14** - Mike Stout

**15** - Judith Howard  
- Adam Shiflett

**16** - Chelsea Bosserman

**17** - Hunter Black, Jr.  
- Henry Breeding  
- Rose Sadano

**18** - Vanessa Harner

**19** -  Lester & Amy Herman  
-  Glenwood & Kerry Fretwell

**20** - Stoney Caricofe

**22** - Randall Hinebaugh

**23** -  George & Mary Taylor

**26** - Julia Miller

**27** - Karen Maugans

**30** - Paul Abbe  
- Casey Houser  
- Laura Lewis



# Full Surrender To Jesus Christ

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.” 1 John 1:5-10 ESV

This thought has really been weighing on me here recently. Last month was about pride and humility, and since I wrote that I have been contemplating pride a lot. I believe that pride is one of our foremost enemies and honestly is our Trojan horse. I'm not saying anything new here, I know we all need a level of pride. But when pride leads to the elevation of us over God and his plan even unknowingly with the best of intentions, our own setbacks by our own hand are coming. I have lived this and as the old saying goes I've eaten my share of crow. It all really sounds elementary like “Ok thanks, I'll start being more humble now!” If only it were that simple, it turns out the act of honestly giving life over to Jesus Christ is one of the hardest things that most people will ever do. Maybe they honestly one day actually did, but you know sometime later (from my personal journey) they put more faith in their personal pride of life than the origin and Creator of all things. This is about full surrender to Jesus Christ, who I am convinced is alive and well and who did more for us than we honestly can ever fully comprehend in this life.

The passage above I think gives a perfect picture to Christians today and unbelievers also. We can't walk in darkness and be holding to God's unchanging hand. If we really choose to walk with him in his eternal light, the blood of Jesus cleanses us. Until then we aren't clean, and saying that we have no sin (which can only come from a position of pride) we make him a liar, and his word can't do us any good if it isn't in us. I encourage you to read Proverbs 16:5-7. When we get rid of arrogance and pride, we are no longer against God, and when we truly please God he even says that our enemies will become peaceful. If you're reading this as an unbeliever in Christ, I ask you to lay down pride and come to him. He doesn't guarantee an easy path, but if you take up your cross and follow him, he has made promises to his own that really are more beautiful than you will ever get or reach in

this life on your own. There has never been a promise he has made that anyone has seen to be false. He is fair and just to not only the good people, but also the bad. His faithfulness endures forever. It takes a lot for us as believers to swallow our pride, but according to the words we claim to read, believe, and hopefully say, humility in us and pride and bragging in Jesus Christ our savior is truly the only way forward.

We want to attach a poem I was inspired to write a few days ago. I hope it is an encouragement to you and gives you the view of God that I saw when I wrote it. May God bless you and like us on Facebook and Instagram at Real Life Heavenly Hands. We are here to encourage and support you in your walk with God.

Who has found the deepest depth of God? Or who has found the paths which Angels trod. Is there enough time to count up his footsteps, or find out how he has built our place of rest. I think it's impossible to truly praise his name, or too really comprehend the love with which he washed away our stains! My friend, may you understand that he is the ancient of days. And before you were, it was your soul upon which he gazed. How can we even imagine turning away, for when we turn around it's his creation we see night and day. His fingerprints are all you will see, and time to count them all will never be. Please heed his call, and on your prideful knees finally fall. To struggle on your own in this life is futile at best, one day you will be done with putting God to the test. At your own cost it will be, and you will have no choice but to see. He alone is the beginning and end, and it's his message we are supposed to send. Not one made of human minds, but his alone that stands the test of time.

# Kids' Corner - The Story of baby Jesus

By: Sharla Guenther



Does everyone remember the story of Joseph and his coat of many colors? This story takes place many, many years after Joseph - actually it happened about 200 years later!

The people who were from the family of Joseph were called Israelites or Hebrews.

As it happens there were more and

more Israelites than ever before. The Israelites had children, and their children had children and soon there was too many to count.

Most of the Israelites lived in Egypt where there were also a lot of people called Egyptians. Too bad they couldn't all just see each other as the same.



But as you'll soon find out the Israelites and the Egyptians were treated very differently. Anyway, a new king who was called Pharaoh came into power in Egypt. He didn't like it that there were so many Israelites and he thought they would one day take over the land. So he decided to make all the Israelites into slaves.

He made them work from early in the morning till late at night doing very hard work. Even if they were tired the Egyptians wouldn't give them a break, they would just make them work harder. It was very bad.

Pharaoh did all this and he still wasn't happy. The Israelites were still growing in number so he decided to make a law. If any boys were born to the Israelites he would have them killed.

At this time there was an Israelite couple who were expecting to have a baby. When they had a baby boy (whose name would later be Moses) they decided to hide him because they wouldn't let anyone kill this beautiful, precious baby of theirs.

They hid Moses for three months, but as he got older he didn't sleep as much and he cried louder than before. So his parents did the only thing they could do, they made a strong basket (sort of like a mini baby boat) and put blankets around the baby and placed the basket in some tall grass in the Nile river.

Baby Moses had a sister named Miriam, and she watched from a distance to see what would happen to her baby brother. While she was watching she saw somebody coming, she realized it was Pharaoh's daughter and her servants. They were dressed like they were famous, and she had seen her before and remembered what she looked like.

Pharaoh's daughter had come for a swim. While she was swimming she noticed a basket floating a little ways away in the tall grass. So she asked one of her servants to go see what it was.

The girl brought the basket over to her, and when Pharaoh's daughter opened it, the light startled Moses so he woke up and started to cry. "What a sweet, beautiful little baby. It must be one of the Israelite's," Pharaoh's daughter said to her servants.

Miriam had seen what had happened, and she hurried over and asked, "Would you like me to go find an Israelite woman to feed the baby for you?"

"Yes, go and find someone who can nurse the baby." she answered. Miriam ran as fast as she could and told her mother that Pharaoh's daughter had found him and wanted someone to come nurse him.

They went and found Moses with Pharaoh's daughter, and she asked them, "Please help me and nurse this baby, and I will pay you for helping me." (She didn't realize that this was actually Moses' mother).

Later he became the son to Pharaoh's daughter, and that's when she named him Moses, which means she got him out of the water.



**Sermons**  
**by Phone**

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Sermon**

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New Hope United Methodist Church - Pastor Mike Reaves

55 Round Hill School Road; Fort Defiance, VA 24437

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 86, New Hope, VA 24469

Church Phone: (540) 363-5940 / Parsonage Phone: (540) 363-5612

Pastor Mike Reaves' Phone: (757) 653-8537 / Pastor Email: [michaelreaves@vaumc.org](mailto:michaelreaves@vaumc.org)

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