

# The Hilltopper December 2020

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## *From Pastor Mike*

A few thoughts to share as the year ends:

I am thankful for your resilience and faithfulness in the face of these challenging circumstances. COVID-19 infections are on the rise in Augusta County, yet we continue to engage in ministry in a safe and responsible way. We have been creative. We have been stretched beyond our comfort.

In November we had 14 people participate in our "Reckless Love" Bible study. (Yes, it is possible to have an in-person Bible study with face coverings and social distancing.) We distributed ham rolls and Advent devotionals and raised \$1,000 for the local food pantry. The UMW Circle of Love held its first meeting in November. The UMM met and elected new officers for 2021. We may be fatigued but we still push ahead.

This month we will have a four-week Advent study beginning Wednesday, December 2. I have a few books available if you are interested. The Local Expressions craft group is planning an event to raise money for outreach.

Advent and Christmas will push us to try different approaches to worship and ministry. Thanks to everyone who helped decorate the sanctuary for Advent. We had to do it in stages this year – perhaps, not as much fun and having a large group come together, but we did it. Our thanks to Martha Fretwell, Wanda Harding, Kim Maugans, Susan Mehler, Bruce Rogers, Joetta Walker, and the Riner and Powell families for their help with decorating. And thanks to Wendy McLaren who made the beautiful wreaths. If I have missed anyone, I apologize.

For Worship during the Advent and Christmas seasons, our theme will be "Company's Coming." Advent It is a season of excitement and anticipation and joy. We may not be ready for what is coming. And yet, in this season, there is joy. And we have a sense that we can start all over again, because "Company Is Coming."

The 2021 calendar is here and features different photographs each month as we look at special moments from the past few years. We have 100 calendars available. Make sure you get a copy for your home.

We cannot sing Christmas carols in the sanctuary. That is hard. I know we miss singing very much. So, we will try something different this year. Each Sunday after the benediction, we will gather in the parking lot to sing a favorite carol. It may be cold outside, but those carols will warm our hearts. For those of you watching from home, I am not sure we will be able to include this in our livestream.

Christmas Eve will be different this year. After consulting with the Worship Committee, the Healthy Church Team, and other area United Methodist Churches, I have decided not to have an in-person Christmas Eve service. Instead, we will work with four other local churches (Barren Ridge COB, Laurel Hill Baptist, Middle River COB, and Mt. Horeb Presbyterian) to record a service of Lessons and Carols to share online. More details to come as this service comes together.

As we enter into Advent and journey to the manger together, I pray that your heart will be filled with the joy of this season as we join our hearts in worship and prayer.

Yours in Christ.

*Pastor Mike*

# Important Upcoming Dates:

Wednesday, December 2nd, 7:00pm

Thursday, December 3rd, 6:30pm

Monday, December 7th, 7:00pm

Tuesday, December 8th, 7:00pm

Wednesday, December 9th, 7:00pm

Wednesday, December 16th, 7:00pm

Wednesday, December 23rd, 7:00pm

Advent Study - Week 1

Church Council Meeting

Circle of Hope meets

Circle of Love meets

Advent Study - Week 2

Advent Study - Week 3

Advent Study - Week 4



## Reverse Christmas Parade!

Come enjoy a drive-thru Reverse Christmas Parade at the New Hope Ruritan Community Center on Saturday, December 12th from 5pm to 7pm.

*Look for the New Hope UMC display!*

# **New Hope United Methodist Church Charge Conference**

Saturday, October 24, 2020 at 1:00 pm

Present (*In-Person*): Mike Reaves, Cindy Deavers, Jennifer Strother, Alicia Copeland, Bruce Rogers and Wanda Harding

Present (*via Zoom*): Victor Gomez, Andy Harbick, Dallas VanLear, Samantha Brensinger, Larry Hinebaugh and Nadine Hinebaugh

Rev. Gomez called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm. Andy Harbick, District Lay Leader was introduced.

Meeting was opened by Pastor Mike with prayer.

- ~ Rev. Gomez shared a brief meditation and video with focus on Romans 12:2
- ~ Election of Charge Conference Secretary: Wanda Harding was approved
- ~ Election of Church Leaders
- ~ Officer approved as presented. Mike explained there are some vacancies. Dallas made motion and Jennifer seconded to give authority to the administrative council to approve vacancies when filled. Motion was approved.
- ~ Lay Servants (all were approved) Jennifer Strother, Leverne Herring, Dale Rankin, Kim Maugans
- ~ Clergy Compensation
- ~ Approved base salary of 51800
- ~ Approved accountable reimbursement of 4200
- ~ Approved parsonage exclusion of 7500
- ~ Mission/Ministry of Church
- ~ Jennifer presented an excellent report (attached copy)
- ~ Rev. Gomez complimented New Hope in continuing to be the church God wants church to be even in difficult times. The Church may have left the building during 2020 but the Church has continued to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ. He liked Jennifer's suggestion of hymn sing when allowed. Rev. Gomez notes he continues to pray for Pastor Mike and the New Hope congregation.
- ~ Anointing of Oil followed by Prayer
- ~ Rev. Gomez again thanked everyone.
- ~ Benediction by Andy Harbick, District Lay Leader

*Submitted By: Wanda Harding, Charge Conference Secretary*

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The Circle of Love met on Monday, October 26th at 7:00pm with 6 present. Our president, Joanie, called the meeting to order. A book review/program on "*Finding Peace in an Anxious World*" by Erin James-Brown was presented by Wanda. This is on our UMW reading list and a mission study.

We also reviewed and updated our shut-in list and college student list.

As a mission project, we put the wrappers around candy bars for the upcoming trick or treat project.

The meeting was dismissed with prayer by Joanie.

**Our next meeting will be December 8 th at 7 pm in the Church Social Hall.**

**Circle of Hope will be meeting on Monday, December 7 th at 7 pm in the Church Social Hall.**



# Local Expressions of New Hope

## CRAFTING MINISTRY



### **Local Expressions Crafting Ministry Is Making A Comeback!**

We will be holding a socially-distanced crafting session this Saturday, December 8th, in the Fellowship Hall of the church starting at 10am. Jennifer Strother will be teaching how to make snowman ornaments. All of the materials will be supplied but we are asking that each participant help with cost by bringing a bag of cotton balls! Hopefully, you will have time to make several ornaments - one to take home and others to offer for a free-will offering during the New Hope Ruritans' *Reverse Christmas Parade* on December 12th. The proceeds from these ornaments will go to a special local mission opportunity. More information coming on that in the very near future.

On December 8th, at the Circle of Love meeting, there will also be a second craft available - jar stenciling! Bring a jar from home to stencil - preferably a clear jar without raised lettering on it, like you find on Ball or Kerr canning jars.

Plan on letting your creative juices flow for as long as you want - or until we run out of materials!



**The Church Council did not meet in November. We will have our last meeting of 2020 on December 3rd.**

**The minutes to this meeting will be available in the January 2021 Hilltopper.**

# Merry Christmas!

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12-19-1997

I'M SORRY GUY, I KNOW THAT YOU'VE GOT  
A GOOD HEALTH PLAN AND YOU GIVE OUT  
FREE GIFTS AND ALL, BUT JESUS REALLY  
DOES HAVE A MUCH BETTER PLAN

**Same Name?:** A little boy named Nicholas told the store's Santa Claus: "You and I have the same name." Santa says: "Well, hello Harold."

**Going the wrong way in the "Advent Rush":** While a man had gone out driving to do some Christmas shopping, his wife had been watching TV when she heard the announcer say, "Be very careful and watch driving on Interstate 5 today, there is a motorist driving the wrong way!" His wife got hold of him on the cell phone to warn him, and his reply was: "You tell me, there are hundreds of them here!"

**God's Not Deaf:** Two young boys were spending the night at their grandparents' house the week before Christmas. At bedtime, the two boys knelt beside their beds to say their prayers. The younger one began praying at the top of his lungs: "I PRAY FOR A NEW BICYCLE..." "I PRAY FOR A NEW NINTENDO..." His older brother leaned over, nudged him and said, "Why are you shouting? God isn't deaf." to which the little brother replied, "No, but Grandma is!"

**Cryptic Christmas Card:** A man sent his friend a cryptic Christmas card. It said: A B C D E F G H I J K M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z. The recipient puzzled over it for weeks, finally gave up and wrote asking for an explanation. In July he received the explanation on a postcard: "No L."



# EMMA'S RIDE

Join the New Hope Community to give support to Emma and her family, who need a replacement chair-lift minivan.

Get your Snowman ornament and make a donation towards 'Emma's Ride'.

We will have a float at the Reverse New Hope Christmas Parade on December 12th, where you can get an ornament and leave a gift of cash or a check.



The entire amount will go to the Via family. We hope this will be a community endeavor to help one of our own.

Emma's Ride will be smoother because you give your support.

Sponsored by the  
New Hope United  
Methodist Women  
P.O. Box 86  
New Hope, VA 24469

(Checks can be made payable to the UMW with a note in the memo line for "Emma's Ride")



# BIRTHDAYS and ANNIVERSARIES

**1** - Steve Broyles  
 - Robert Corbin  
 - Diane Miller

**2** - Robin Craun  
 - Leslie Shaver

**4** - Matt Carr

**5** - Susan Baldwin  
 - Charles Darrah  
 - Michele Taylor


**6** - Clarissa Booth  
 - Karen Whitmer

**7** - Betty Gruber  
 - Beth Rosen

**8** - Peggy Corbin


**9** - Josh Dively

**10** - Bernie Powers

**13** - Jennifer Bottenmiller  
 -  Jake & Julie Botkin

**14** - Brenda Price  
 - Dawn White

**16** - B.F. Caricofe III  
 - Dwight Craig  
 - Shelvie Critzer  
 - Wyatt Markow  
 - Carrie Reed  
 - Paul Whitmer

**17** - Kim Maugans  
 -  Tim & Suzanne Lank


**20** - Amye Bergman

**21** - Emily Howdysshell


**22** - Keith Chittum

**23** - Julia Botkin  
 - Cheryl Howell

**25** - B.F. Caricofe, Jr  
 - Wally Smith

**26** - Carl Caricofe, Sr  
 - Jesse Hartman  
 -  Larry & Nadine Hinebaugh

**27** - Jeffrey Shipe

**28** - Logan Kraisser  
 -  Mathew & Tanya Keys

**29** - Christopher Dively

**30** -  Kim & Karen Maugans

**31** -  Andy & Dana Breeding  
 -  Gary & Kathy Lewis

# Kids' Corner - The Nativity

*By: Sharla Guenther*



In those days the government decided that they should count everyone that lived in that area of the world. So Joseph had to take Mary to his town, Bethlehem to register.

It took Mary and Joseph a long time to get to Bethlehem. They didn't have cars back then, so it probably took them a lot longer to get there. This was very tiring for Mary because she was soon going to have a baby.

When they reached the town, all the hotels were full and there was nowhere that they could stay. Finally, someone felt bad for them, and offered them a place to stay.

The Bible doesn't say for sure where they stayed but most people think that they stayed in a small barn where animals were kept. In any case, doesn't it seem strange that Jesus, the King of the Jews wasn't born in a fancy palace or even a hospital?

Mary and Joseph were thankful that they at least had a place to lay down. It

was warm, and there was plenty of straw to lay on. That night an exciting, wonderful thing happened. Mary and Joseph had a baby! But it wasn't just any baby, it was Baby Jesus! The creator of the whole world, the King of Kings, the one who would save the world.

The little baby boy fell asleep in Mary's arms and she wrapped him in cloths and laid him in a manger on some clean straw. Mary and Joseph soon fell asleep, they were so glad to have this special baby join their family.

Some shepherds who lived near Bethlehem, were out at night in their fields watching over their sheep. They were worried a bigger animal might come and hurt the sheep, so that sat on a hill visiting and watching their sheep together.

Suddenly there was a bright light. Now this wasn't just any bright light The light was so bright that they had to close their eyes for a minute because the light hurt their eyes.

When they opened their eyes to see what was going on, a beautiful angel was standing in the air just above them with his arms opened wide.



The shepherds looked at each other in disbelief, but realized it must be real, because they were all seeing the same thing. All at once they were very afraid, but they didn't run because they were too stunned.

Then the angel spoke to them. "Do not be afraid. I'm here to bring you good news for all people. Today in Bethlehem a baby has been born, He is the one that will save the world. You will know the baby because He will be wrapped in cloths, and laying in a manger."

Suddenly, just as quickly as the first angel came, there were a large group of angels, and they said together, "Glory to God, and peace to all people on earth." After they spoke, they floated away.

The shepherds were amazed and excited, did everyone know this news, or just them? They had to go see this baby the angels were talking about.

They ran as fast as they could, and soon found Mary, Joseph, and Baby Jesus. The shepherds fell to their knees when they saw Jesus, they were filled with joy that they had found the Lord.

During the time when Jesus was born there was a very mean king who ruled the land His name was King Herod. Remember his name, because we will talk about him later.

Soon after Jesus was born, wise men were traveling on their camels. One night they noticed a very strange star in the sky. They knew that this star meant that the King of the Jews, the One who would save the world had been born.

When the mean King... (What was his name again?) Herod heard this, he got very worried. He called a meeting with all the other important people in the area and asked them where this special baby had been born. The people replied, "In Bethlehem." They knew this because they heard that one day a special person would come from there and take care of all the people.

Then King Herod called the wise men to a secret meeting and found out from them exactly where they saw the star. He then told them, "Go and find this child. As soon as you find him, tell me, so that I can go and worship him." After they had spoken to the King, the wise men left to find the baby. They didn't know exactly where the baby was, but at night they followed the star in the east. They followed the star until it hung right over the very place where Jesus was.

Since it took the wise men a while to get to baby Jesus, they probably didn't arrive the day Jesus was born but sometime later. When they finally had arrived they were very excited and happy. They found Jesus laying in Mary's arms, and they bowed down and worshipped him.

They opened the gifts they had brought Jesus. The gifts were gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These were very expensive gifts. Gifts that you would give to a King, not to a baby.

The story of Christmas is special, full of miracles and strange visitors all coming to visit a King and someday the Savior of the world.

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## **Sermons By Phone**

**Hear Pastor Mike's  
Weekly Sermon**

**1-877-369-1437**



# Thank You

**We wanted to thank everyone for all of your prayers, messages, cards, flowers, food, love and support that you have given to us over these past few weeks after the passing of our beloved wife, mother and Gigi.**

**May Mary's memory always bring a smile  
and good memories to all of us.**

***Thank You!***

**~ Leon, Cindy, Cheryl, Lane and Harlow**

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