

# The Hilltopper



**August 2020**

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## *From Pastor Mike*

I want you to know that I really miss seeing you face to face.

I am trying to reach out to I have not seen or spoken to since last March. If you have not heard from me yet, I will do my best to contact you soon. If you have a pastoral need that cannot wait, call the parsonage or leave a message at the church and I will be in touch.

Many believe it will be a long time before they will feel comfortable coming back to church during this pandemic. If you, a member of your household or even a family member who is in your "extended bubble" have risk factors, please be cautious. Do no harm to yourself or someone you love.

Our first month back to in-person worship has gone smoothly. Between 23 and 29 people are coming to the sanctuary and we are doing the best we can under less than ideal circumstances. As summer travel and vacation time ends, we will see a few more people join us. If you are on the fence about returning, take your time and come when you are ready.

Online services will continue for those who cannot attend or believe that home is the best place to be on Sunday.

One question I am asked at least once a week is, "How much longer can this go on?" Good question. I have no idea what the answer is. Nobody does. We may be waiting a long time for an answer.

The question we need to ask is, "What do we do now?" because we cannot afford to wait for things to get back to normal – whatever that will mean down the road.

How do we remain connected during this pandemic? Online worship helps but I am not sure it is enough. Many of our members do not have internet access in their homes. Many do not even have DVD players. Perhaps we need a team of people to call and send letters to those folks on a regular basis. I know some of you are already doing this.

How do we meet our social needs? One of the strengths of this church is that we love to get together and share a meal or play games (often both). That is hard to do now. All small group ministries are challenged – United Methodist Women, United Methodist Men, Sunday School classes, adult choir, Wednesday Bible study. Virtual meetings help but they cannot completely fill the need for personal contact and sharing. Can you help us with a solution?

How do we prepare a budget for 2021 under these circumstances? We may need to make significant cuts and tighten our belts. A budget is a set of priorities. What are our priorities for 2021? Tithes and offerings tend to be predictable from year to year but based on our giving since April, we can assume will have less resources available next year. If you have the means to make a sacrificial gift, please prayerfully consider doing so.

Pray for your SPRC and Finance Committee as budget decisions are made.

The Sweet Hour of Prayer group is now meeting in person again on Saturday mornings at 8:00AM. Whatever we do must begin in prayer. Bring your face covering and join us in the Social Hall! There is plenty of room.

We may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds tomorrow.

*God is good! All the time! – All the time! God is good!*

Yours in Christ.

*Pastor Mike*



The following are the minutes from the **JULY** meetings 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 23, 2020**

Present (*in-person*): Pastor Mike, Dallas VanLear, Kevin Armstrong, Wanda Harding, Cindy Sheets, Karen Whitmer, Alicia Copeland, Andy Breeding, Samantha Brensinger and Bianca Brensinger.

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

The minutes from the June meeting were accepted as distributed.

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

~ Thanked Wanda and Karen for continuing to count our weekly donations.

~ Last month we took in a little over \$12,000 in donations, staying right at 4 months operating capital.

~ We applied the insurance payment of over \$5,000 to help pay of the line of credit. We also put a \$1,030 payment on the line of credit and now we owe slightly over \$6,000

~ We will be receiving 100% forgiveness for our Paycheck Protection Program loan from the federal government that we received through Dupont Community Credit Union.

~ There was some discussion about how we plan for our 2021 budget.

~ As of right now, we are taking in just enough to pay for our payroll, utilities and other bills; and that's about it.

**Trustees:** *(Pastor Mike reported)*

~ The Trustees will meet again sometime in August, date TBD.

**Staff-Parish Relations Committee:** *(Andy Breeding reported)*

~ The parsonage evaluation was completed on time, with input from Teresa Barr and Pastor Mike.

**United Methodist Men:** *(Dallas VanLear reported)*

~ Had a worknight during the first part of July, with Kenny, Dallas and Bruce. They cleaned up around the church and pulled some weeds. There will be another worknight on July 30th at 6:30pm.

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

~ Monthly meetings have been canceled.

~ On August 29th at 9:00am, they will have a virtual District Prayer Breakfast.

~ 20 Education Kits have been prepared and will be donated.

~ Donations/Pledges will be due the end of August, there will be a letter sent out to members as a reminder.

~ During the week of November 16th-23rd - the Project Christmas Shoeboxes will be collected.

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

~ The Sweet Hour of Prayer has started meeting again in-person (since July 5th) in the social hall.

~ The Healthy Church Team continues to meet at 7pm every other Tuesday.

~ We have had 3 Sundays of in-person worship - with a low of 23 people attending and a high of 29 people attending in-person.

~ One-third of the members are back for in-person worship. And two-thirds will not return due to safety reasons or PPE regulations.

~ 40 people have filled out the Health Authorization Form. If you have a Health Form on file and don't register by Thursdays, you can still come to in-person worship on Sundays.

~ We have a good group of volunteers on Sundays. There have been no reports of any incidents.

~ We are encouraging people to gather and socialize after worship around their cars at a safe distance or outside at the picnic shelter.

~ We are trying to improve the video quality online.

~ We have applied to the district conference for a \$1,000 grant that will go to help us pay for upgraded online video/audio.

~ We will need a guest speaker on August 30th, if anyone is interested, please contact Pastor Mike.

### **Communications:** *(Cindy Sheets reported)*

~ Cindy thanked everyone for their patience as we have tried to quickly navigate online and live-streaming of the worship services during these past months.

~ Dallas thanked Pastor Mike, Cindy S., Alicia and Austine for continuing to bring the worship services to everyone online during these difficult times.

### **New Business:**

~ Next Church Council meeting will be August 20, 2020 at 6:30pm.

The meeting was closed by Dallas VanLear with appreciation for everyone making an effort to be there during this uncertain time.

Pastor Mike thanked everyone in the committee for their leadership during this time.

Pastor Mike closed the meeting with a prayer.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Cynthia Sheets  
Recording Secretary

**The next Church Council Meeting will be on Thursday, August 20, 2020.**

# Have a Laugh...



(See John 21:1-14)

08-24-2005

REMEMBER IN THE BIBLE WHEN THEY SWITCHED TO FISHING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THEIR BOAT AND THEN THEIR LUCK CHANGED ... MAYBE WE SHOULD TRY THAT

As the storm raged, the captain realized his ship was sinking fast. He called out, "Anyone here know how to pray?" One man stepped forward.

"Aye, Captain, I know how to pray."

"Good," said the captain, "you pray while the rest of us put on our life jackets, -  
*We're one short.*"

Did you know that they had automobiles in Jesus' time?  
*Yes, the Bible says that the disciples were all of one Accord.*


After having children, Adam and Eve started getting a lot of questions from their kids about why they no longer lived in Eden. Adam has a simple answer for this: *"Your mother ate us out of house and home."*



**BIRTHDAYS and 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** - Charles Fretwell  
- 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



# Kids' Corner - A Child of God

by Sharla Guenther



This week you won't be hearing a story about someone from the Bible. Instead we're going to tell a story about you and God.

In the Bible there is a book called Psalms. David wrote some of the chapters in this book when he was feeling happy, sad and scared. In the story of David and Goliath you might remember that David was a shepherd and when he was out in the fields he would play music and write some of these songs and poems to God.

This psalm was added to the Bible (like all the other books of the Bible) because what he wrote was given to him from God. God gave David a talent for writing songs and He gave David the words and thoughts to write it down.

This psalm tells us a lot about God and how powerful He is. It also shows us just how much God is involved and cares for us.

David starts the psalm by praising God for always being there for him. He knows that God knows him inside and out and even what he's feeling, thinking and what he's going to do before he does it!

David knows that God is all around him cheering for him and giving him a hand along the way.

Knowing how much God cares about him and everyone else this way, David feels like smiling and crying at the same time because he can't believe how great God is.

Have you ever seen your mom or dad crying at a kindergarten graduation or after you did something really great? This was how David was feeling and I can imagine him thinking these things and crying big happy tears!

Next David thinks about where he could go to get away from God. He's not trying to get away but he's trying to think if there's any place that God wouldn't be able to find him.

Do you think there is a place you could go where God wouldn't be able to find you?

The way David describes it, I think of superheroes. Imagine you could fly as high as the moon or even higher; God would be there. Imagine if you could drill a deep, deep hole right to the middle of the earth, God would be there too!

What if you hid in your darkest closet. Would God find you? Yes! We might think it's dark and no one can see us but God is light, He doesn't see the darkness at all!

There is no place on earth or beyond that you could hide that God wouldn't find you. He is always keeping track of you! Hide and seek won't work with God, He knows where you're going to hide before you get there!

The next part David discusses is about before we were born! Do you think God knew you BEFORE you were born? The answer is yes!

God put you together when you were as tiny as a marble and even smaller! He had big plans for how you would look, what you would be like; He was part of it all.

He knew all about you when you were still inside your mother's tummy. Every tiny freckle, the color of your hair, even that one funny birthmark that you have that no one else has, is all the work of God.

Even now God knows how your growing and changing, what you like and don't like. He has big plans for your life and He's hoping you'll keep looking to Him so you can be the very best you can be.

And another thing, God doesn't make junk! He made you beautiful and precious and in His perfect way. So don't let anyone make you think that you're not good enough or smart enough or pretty enough. You were planned and made by the God of the universe who made you special and different from everyone else!

God is amazing! David started to think about all of God's thoughts. How many thoughts He must have. If you took all the sand from all the world and counted each small grain of it; God would still have more thoughts than all of that!

As David gets closer to the end he starts talking about the wicked people in the world. I think it bothers him more and more because he understands how much God loves us, how wonderful and amazing He is, but there are still such wicked people that hate God.

David wants all the wicked people that make fun of God and the people that don't use God's name in a nice way to be taken off the earth. He doesn't want to be near them.

The last two verses David asks God to do some things for him. He asks God to search his thoughts and his desires. He wants God to see his loyalty and love for Him.

David wants to stay strong and be challenged by God. When we face difficult times these challenges can make us grow stronger and count on God more. David welcomed these times so he could have a better relationship with God.

The last thing he asks God is that if there's any bad thought or sin in him that God would lead him away from doing that and help him find his way to God in heaven.

Throughout this chapter David talks about God's knowledge about every part of us from beginning to end. Realizing this, he accepts and asks God to search him and to keep him true and on the path to knowing and seeking God.

So whenever you're feeling bad about yourself or alone remember Psalm 139 and how you can never get away from God, He is always with us, cheering for us along the way.



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# Newsletter

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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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