

# The Hilltopper



June 2022

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## *From Pastor Mike*

Another year of High School and College graduations has (mostly) come and gone. Many of you have children or grandchildren who have just completed some level of schooling. And we have quite a few young people connected to New Hope who received diplomas as part of the Class of 2022.

Graduations have been on my mind a lot these past few weeks.

I want to share the following story with you. Maybe you have heard or read it before, but I believe it teaches us all a good lesson related to this time of the year.

A young man was getting ready to graduate from college. For a long time, he had admired a beautiful sports car in a local car dealer's showroom. He knew his father could well afford it and told his father that was all he wanted as a graduation gift. As his graduation day approached the young man began looking for signs that his father had bought the car.

Finally, on the morning of his graduation, his father called him to his room and told him how proud he was to have such a fine son and told him how much he loved him. He handed his son a beautifully wrapped gift box. Curious, the young man opened the box and found a lovely leather-bound Bible with his name embossed in gold. Angry that this was not a car, he raised his voice to his father and said, "With all your money, you give me a Bible?" and then stormed out of the house, leaving the Bible at home.

Many years passed and the young man was very successful in his own business. He had a beautiful home and wonderful family but realized his father was very old and thought perhaps he should go to him as he had not spoken to him since that graduation day.

Before he could make arrangements, he received a phone call telling him that his father had passed away and had willed all his possessions to his son, so he needed to come home and take care of things. When he arrived at his father's house, sadness and regret filled his heart. He began sorting through his father's papers and saw the still new Bible as he had left it years ago. With tears in his eyes, he opened the Bible and as he turned the pages a car key dropped from the back of the Bible. It had a tag with the dealer's name and on the tag was the date of his graduation and the words "paid in full."

How many times do we miss out on blessings because they are not packaged as we expected! How often do our expectations become such a priority that they completely cloud or even poison our outlook on life? And how often what we expect to receive is something material and is not worth the disappointment that we might experience. Those are just things that we cannot take to our graves anyway.

Gifts are not something that life owes us; they are simply things that someone has chosen to give us from the goodness of their heart. Let us never judge people by the things that they bring - or do not bring - as gifts. By doing so we only bring misery to ourselves and to those whom we claim to love.

Enjoy your graduate and celebrate his or her achievements during this season.

May God bless the Class of 2022.

Yours in Christ,

*Pastor Mike*



# ***Congratulations to our Graduates!***

**Megan Aldhizer** - graduating from JMU with a Master's in Education

**Derek Deavers** - graduating from Fort Defiance HS and will go to work at Hershey

**Amanda Eacho** - graduating from Powhatan HS & will attend Christopher Newport University

**Wyatt Herman** - graduating from Fort Defiance HS and will attend UVA

**Cadlee Jarvis** - graduating from Fishburne Military School and will attend VMI

**Maggie Lank** - graduating from West Springfield HS and will attend the U of Tennessee

**Graci Redifer** - graduating from Buffalo Gap

**Aiden Shifflett** - graduating from Fort Defiance HS & will attend Blue Ridge CC and then VT

**Courtney Stout** - graduating from Carilion Hospital in Roanoke and then she will be working with her dad and also at the Augusta Regional Free Clinic.

# Even Dirt Gets To Rest!

Logan Summers <https://bulletindigest.com/2022/04/29/even-dirt-gets-to-rest/>

We are busy! It doesn't matter whether young or old, employed or retired, there is a lot going on in our lives. Sometimes, we can feel overwhelmed and on the brink of burn out but just keep going on. Before that happens, or if that is how you feel right now, consider these concepts from scripture:

God rested. After six days of creating, God "rested" from all the work He had done (Gen. 2:2). That is, He ceased creating (Heb. 4:4). God uses His example of resting on that day for the Israelites to rest every seventh day. We associate the Old Testament with the Sabbath because the Israelites had to keep it (Ex. 20:8-11). But it was not merely a memorial remembering God's week of Creation. God's deliverance from Egyptian slavery provides a reason to have a time of rest (Deut. 5:12-15). Exodus 31:17 even indicates refreshment came to God on the seventh day. Even on our "days off" we find it difficult to cease work. Although we do not observe the Sabbath as Christians, we ought to respect and think about why God encouraged the Israelites to rest.

Jesus rested. It would be hard to argue there is any man busier than Jesus. We constantly see him followed by crowds, always teaching, and always encouraging, and always on His way. Jesus is never late, never overwhelmed. Yet Jesus made sure He had time to rest and refresh. In Matthew



early in the morning to and pray. In Matthew 14:23 Jesus dismisses the crowds to go up to a mountain by himself to pray. On another occasion, Jesus would be taking a nap in a boat after leaving the crowds (Mark 4:35-40). Jesus rested and often refreshed Himself spiritually by connecting with the Father during His time alone.

be hard to argue there is Jesus. We constantly crowds, always teaching, and always on His way. never unprepared, and Jesus made sure He had In Mark 1:35 He wakes go to a desolate place 14:23 Jesus dismisses

Jesus commanded His disciples to rest. Soon before feeding five thousand people, Jesus commanded the disciples to "rest awhile" (Mk. 6:31). He knew the rest He and the disciples needed was important. Even good things (in this case, Jesus teaching) can be delayed to focus on something necessary (cf. Luke 10:38-42).

Even the dirt gets to rest. God commanded a time of rest for fields. Six years the Israelites could work a field, but in the seventh year, there is a "Sabbath of solemn rest for the land" (Lev. 25:1-7). In order for the dirt to keep being good dirt, it needs rest!

If you feel overwhelmed and over-busy, it may very well be that you need some rest. It may take a schedule rearranging, stepping back from certain unnecessarys in life, and even asking for help. Rest is a God-approved reality and we can honor Him in it (1 Cor. 10:31). Remember, even the dirt gets to rest!





## Vacation Bible School 2022

VBS 2022 at New Hope UMC will be on Friday, July 29th, Saturday, July 30th, with a picnic to follow worship on Sunday, July 31st.

The Knights of North Castle: The Quest for the King's Armor invites children to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of God's power, by exploring how we put on the armor of God. Kids will take on the role of brave Knights and begin their quest each session by opening the King's Book to start a spiritual adventure!

We will need volunteers to help us make this event successful for the kids. A sign-up sheet will be posted in the Narthex for needed volunteer positions and/or needed items.

***Plan now to join us for an exciting time for our children's ministry!***





The following are the minutes from the [MAY](#) 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 - May 26, 2022**

Present: Kevin Armstrong, Alicia Copeland, Bianca Brensinger, Samantha Brensinger, Cindy Deavers, Pastor Mike, Bruce Rogers, Cindy Sheets and Karen Whitmer.

The meeting was called to order by Pastor Mike, with devotions and prayer by Bianca Brensinger.

The minutes from the April meeting were accepted as distributed.

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

- The financial record has not been updated due to the financial secretary's parents being in the hospital. So there is \$13,072 in the bank that has not been reported yet.
  - There was some discussion about the possibility of having a back-up for the financial secretary during this or if future situations arise.
- We have enough to make our general apportionments for this month.
- All audits have been taken care of until next year.

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

- All expenses have been paid as normal.
- Hopefully, all reports will be updated next month.
- \$250 was given to the New Hope Fire Department, per last month's discussion.

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

- Darrell Deavers is working on a number of small issues throughout the church.
- Cindy Sheets brought up that the fire extinguishers throughout the church need to be inspected and replaced as needed. We will contact A.B. Fire Incorporated to see if they are still in business, if they are, we will get them to inspect them, if not, we will have to find someone else to bring them up to code.
- Bruce Rogers asked if we have a designated place for our Weaver Insurance paperwork. Cindy Deavers stated that it is available online for us to view when needed.

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

- Pastor Mike said we need to be patient when it comes to getting enough volunteers for Sunday morning worship. We currently have a lot of Lay readers, we could use a few more for the children's message. Kim Maugans is coordinating the ushers. And we still need to work on getting nursery workers for both during Sunday School and worship time.
  - It was stated that if the monitor in the nursery gets fixed, we may have better luck in getting nursery workers again.

### **Worship:** *(Alicia Copeland reported)*

- Due to lack of participation, Tuesday afternoon rehearsals will be canceled and the music practice will only be on Wednesday evenings from now on.
- Nancy Basset will set in for Austine during music rehearsal until Austine can come back in a month or so.

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

- There will be an upcoming Potato Bar to help fundraise for Sandy Wyrick's upcoming surgery on Father's Day, Sunday, June 19th.
- Vacation Bible School will be on Friday, July 29th, Saturday, July 30th, with a picnic and closing program on Sunday, July 31st. The theme will be Knights of North Castle, with the armor of God as a theme.

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

- The UMM has agreed not to have formal meetings during the summer. But every third Thursday, they will get together to help out with projects around the church.
- They predict that HOTS will never be the same again, although they don't think it will be something that will end completely. Because the UMM will not have HOTS again this year, they will focus on helping in whatever way possible to make the 50's Night Drive-In very successful and more of a church-wide event.
- They may decide to do a Spaghetti Supper or BBQ of some kind to help raise money in the fall for their mission projects.

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

- The next meeting will be in the next few weeks.

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

- Adriel Lee Kutz was born on Thursday, April 14, 2022 to Nathan and Cheryl Kutz; and grandparents Leon Sheets and the late Mary Sheets.

### **Lay Leader:** *(Pastor Mike reported)*

- Jennifer Strother will be starting a new bible study in the G.I.F.T. Sunday School class in the first part of June.

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

- Cindy Sheets made note to the council that if we proceed with adding additional microphones for the sanctuary, that currently there are no additional open slots on the soundboard for additional microphone inputs. Kevin stated that we may need to take some microphones out that we don't use as often to accommodate any new microphones that we may want to install.



**Youth:** *(Bianca Brensinger reported)*

- The youth want to have opportunities to get together more often. They propose having movie nights, bowling nights, board game nights, and/or other activities outside of Sunday School.
- The youth wants to work towards being able to go to the Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA in either November or December. They are also interested in going to Kentucky to visit the Ark Experience sometime next year.
- The youth honored and recognized all the graduates last Sunday during worship.

Pastor Mike ended the meeting and sent us off with prayer. The meeting ended at 7:07pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Cynthia Sheets  
Recording Secretary



## **Music Ministry**

Each week, we prepare the music for upcoming worship services.

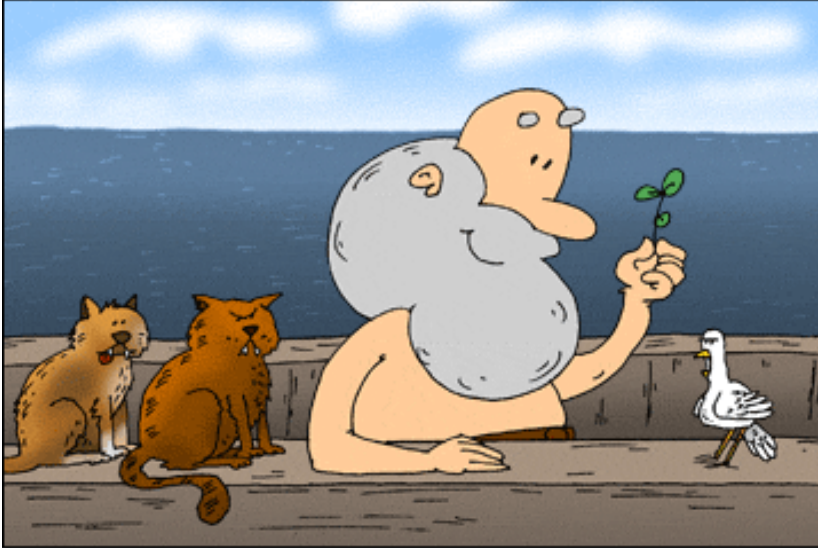
Rehearsals are between 30 minutes and 45 minutes.

### **Wednesdays:**

**5:00pm - Children's Choir Practice**

**5:45pm - Handbell Choir Practice**

**6:30pm - Sanctuary Choir Practice**



(See Genesis 6-8)

09-16-2011

YOU THROW THE CATS OVERBOARD AND I'LL  
TELL YOU WHERE I FOUND THE BRANCH

52 years. I never looked at another woman. I was attentive and loved her dearly."

"That's great," says St. Peter. "That'll be two points."

"Hmmm," says the man. "This is going to be harder than I thought. Well, I attended church regularly, volunteered my time and tithed faithfully."

"Wonderful," says St. Peter, "That's worth another point."

"One point!" says the man. "Okay, okay. I was involved with a prison ministry for twenty-five years. I went into the prison, at least monthly, and shared Jesus with them."

"Wow!" says St. Peter. "That's another two points!"

"Only two points!" says the man. "At this rate, it'll be only by the grace of God that'll I'll ever get into this place."

"Bingo!" says St. Peter. "That's one hundred points! Come on in."

## Just For Laughs

### How to Get into Heaven

A man dies and meets St. Peter at the Pearly Gates. Peter says to the man, "Here's how it works. You need to have one hundred points to get into heaven. You tell me about all the good things you've done. They are all worth a certain number of points. If your total is one hundred or more, you can come in."

"Well," says the man. "I was happily married to the same woman for



# Conversations With Our Baby Boy

I'm pleased to tell you that Cheryl and I were blessed from above with our son Adriel Lee Kutz. We can't tell you how much our Lord has blessed us through him. As I see his mother and I in him, I also see the innocence and the purity of a fresh new life. It was an incredible reminder of just how pure and beautiful our Lord has made us. For security reasons the hospital staff actually put a device on his ankle so that if he got too close to the exit doors it would alert staff. This is something that is done with every baby. In my mind I imagined him asking me or Cheryl or both of us why that was necessary. To think that this is a necessary precaution (which of course we were happy about him being protected with that) was startling to me. So ever since I've been imagining questions from little Adriel to us and how we would answer them. This month's writing is an attempt to answer those questions with what I believe is the true compass and roadmap, the word of God. I invite you to read the passages in their context that verses will be cited from.

"Mommy and Daddy, what is this thing on my ankle?" "I've only been here a few minutes and it feels weird." "Well son it's to keep you safe from someone taking you from us." "And it will help us and the staff save you if someone tries to." "Why would someone take me from my parents?" "Well Adriel, only a bad person would do that." "What makes someone bad?" "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?" Jeremiah 17:9 "For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person." Mark 7:21-23 ESV

How do you fix the corrupt human heart? In our country our babies now need that device nearly as soon as they are born. And of course given the most recent school shooting incident, we continually worry for our children's safety even more as they are older. What has brought us here? We have progressed in the last century, but at the same time walked further away from God as a culture. Progress has come and is taking its toll. All you have to do is read up on the history of Christianity in this country and you will see things have changed. I know there are some spots Christians would like to change, but what I'm referring to are the preachers whose faith, prayer, and sweat brought about two great awakenings and the circuit riders who kept the fires of revival burning. All of them were listened to because of their sincerity and because they had given their lives to their cause. For many of them, it had cost them everything. They captured the lives of sinners and grabbed the wickedness in their heart with the Gospel. This country became more pure because of it.

It has become very easy and cheap to be a Christian in our culture. When people look at our lives, do they see people who live what they believe, know that they believe, tell what they believe, and that will die on what they believe? Are we working and fighting for the Kingdom of God? Are you able to live without feeding your soul on God's word? Are we changing the culture for Christ? Or is the culture changing us? What does that have to do with the ankle sensor our son had to wear? Or even more recently the safety of children in our schools? I believe we are seeing the triumph of hypocrisy and the failure of fake Christianity. When we don't truly stand on the word of God people notice and we are not regarded as authentic but as fake. The more we have gotten away from the bible in our country the more decline we have seen in our morals overall. The arms of the idols of selfishness and "do as we want" in our country are loaded up with the security, sanctity, innocence, and souls of the children of our country. We have erased in our culture a supreme standard of right and wrong. Everyone does what is right in their own eyes now. Truth is now subjective to each person. It sounds great at first, but when people commit hurtful acts they are simply doing what is right in their own eyes. We on a large scale must be nice and can't "judge". All the while evil grows and compounds.

My friend the darkness is growing, the air is colder and we who are called as disciples of our Master are being called to do something about it. How do we confront evil? We must revive ourselves first with the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is the only thing that will change the souls of



wicked people. Will you deny yourself and take up your cross? Our God is a consuming fire, spend time with him and I believe the fire will spread in this dry time. Hearts and souls need to be changed and saved. The harvest is still plentiful, but the laborers are few. We have a job to do, there is a battle to fight. Our children's safety depends on it. Our enemy is still a roaring lion seeking who he can devour. Put on the armor of God and stand firm. Pick up the sword of the word and pull down strongholds like Paul. Jesus said "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?" Luke 6:46 ESV "If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land." 2 Chronicles 7:14 ESV

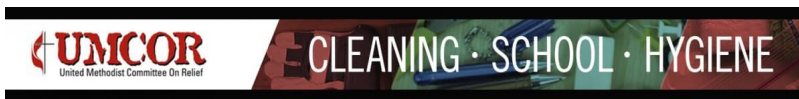
What if all of us as believers in Christ were so passionate, so brave, so bold, that even if it cost us dearly, we please our Lord and he sends revival. I believe that's what will change people and what will save our children from evil. To God be the Glory and to you who read this be passionate for the Gospel. God bless you all.

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

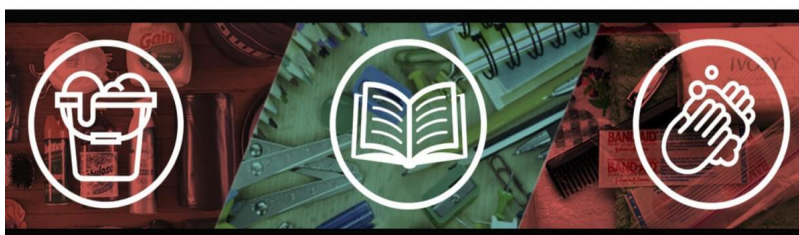


**Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup> 10:30am**  
is **United Methodist Women's**  
**Sunday with guest speaker,**  
**Rev. Russell Heinrich.**

Following the service we'll have a potato bar lunch as a free-will offering to help raise money for Sandy Wyrick's medical expenses for her spinal surgery.



**KIT COLLECTION**  
**@ Annual Conference**



### **Kits for Conference**

Checks for donations can be made to New Hope UMC and marked for: 'KITS'

Hygiene Kits: \$12  
Flood Buckets: \$75

*No longer collecting school kits*

Non-perishable foods: (For local families, distributed locally – the box will be in Narthex through June 19th)



# Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1 - Pastor Mike Reaves
  -  Robert & Peggy Corbin
- 3 - Reagan Bailey
  - Mark Hite
  - Isaac Thomas Markow
- 4 - Courtney Joyner
  -  Mike & Sharyn Huff
- 5 - Megan Rickman
- 7 - Jeffrey Bragg
  - Eddie Shaver
  -  Jack & JoEtta Walker
- 8 - R.W. Stogdale
- 10 - Tracy McCray
- 11 - Harold Strickler
  -  Kenny & Carolyn Fretwell
- 12 - Abby Armstrong
  - Broc Powell
  -  Greg & Kathy Killough
- 13 - Janet Harris
  - Richard Stogdale
- 14 - Kaylee McLaren
- 15 - Elizabeth Barnhart
  - Teresa Barr
  - Emma Shifflett
- 15 - Ruth Wampler
  -  Mike & Nellie Bosserman
- 15 -  Bill & Gail Shipe
- 16 - Jessica Arnold
- 17 -  Robert & Judy Riner
- 18 - Owen Harner
  - Junior Morris
- 19 -  BF & Peggy Caricofe
- 20 - Ricky Rowe
- 21 - Billy Morrison
  -  Fred & Julia Arndt
- 22 - Howard Poole, Jr
- 23 - Kindra Bragg
  -  Owen & Dolly Harner
- 24 - Katie Harding Toole
  -  Shawn & Jennifer Cook
- 25 - Linda Clark
  - Paula Whitmer
- 26 - Zack Joyner
  - Sam Carr
  -  Michael & Patty Morris
  -  Mike & Susie Shreckhise
- 27 - Janice Howdysheul
  - Timothy Randolph

# Kids' Corner - Parable of the Talents

By: Sharla Guenther



This story is called the Parable of the Talents. A parable is a type of story Jesus would tell so we would learn something from it.

Jesus' stories had more than one meaning. For example, this story is about talents which was a super large amount of money in Bible times. Today a talent might be worth a million dollars!

A talent in this story can also mean our gifts or abilities. Something special and amazing God gives just to you, almost like a super power.

The parable starts like this: A man decided to go on a long trip, so he called his servants and asked them to take care of his house, his stuff and his money.

Keep in mind that the man in this story is like God and the man's servants are God's people (you and me!) The man in this story trusted his servants and believed that they would take care of his special and valuable things.

The man decided to give one servant five talents of money (let's say that it's about five million dollars), to another he gave two talents (or two million), and to the last servant he gave one talent. He gave each servant a large amount he thought they could handle or according to their ability. Our abilities are our special gifts that God gave to each of us. He made some of us smarter about some things than others.



Some of us are good at memorizing, some of us are better at certain sports, and some of us are better at knowing how to help others. Some can solve problems better and some are more generous.

Our ability is something special we have that's different than anyone else. Back to the story, the man left on his trip and the servants each did something with the money that they received.

The man with the five talents went right away and used his money and got five more! The man with the two talents also used his money wisely and gained two more talents.

But the man with one talent took his talent and buried it in the ground to keep the money safe. He didn't even try to do something with it.

He reminds me a bit like a dog that buries a bone. He had lots of time to do something with his money. He could've bought some seeds and planted a garden and made some money but he didn't do anything!

After a nice long trip, the master came back and wanted to know what his servants did with his money. The first man with the five talents said, "You trusted me with five talents and I made five more!"

His master smiled and replied, "Great job, good and faithful servant!" You are trustworthy with a few things so I will put you in charge of lots of things. Come celebrate with me!

I think it's interesting that the master says he trusted him with a FEW things. He gave him five million dollars! That's ALOT of things. But to this master, it was small compared to what he would give and trust him with now.

Then the man with the two talents came and said, "You trusted me with two talents and I made two more!"

His master smiled and replied, "Great job, good and faithful servant!" You are trustworthy with a few things so I will put you in charge of lots of things. Come celebrate with me!

Then the man who received the one talent came and told his master, "I know you work hard for your money, so I was afraid to lose any of it. I decided to bury it and keep it safe. Here is your one talent back."

The master was not impressed and said, "You lazy servant! At the very least you could've taken the money to the bank and you would've at least collected some interest from it."

He immediately took the talent away from the man and gave it to the first man who used his money to make more.

The point Jesus was trying to make is that if you use your special gifts and abilities God will give you more to keep doing these things you are good at. He will trust you with so much more.

If you have a chance to do something for God that he gave you special abilities for and you don't do it, you will lose your special gift.

God considers you very valuable and trusts you to do something for him using your gifts and abilities. If you have a chance to do something and don't because you want to watch tv, play video games, or because you just don't want to do anything; God will take that valuable gift and give it to someone who is doing something with their gifts.

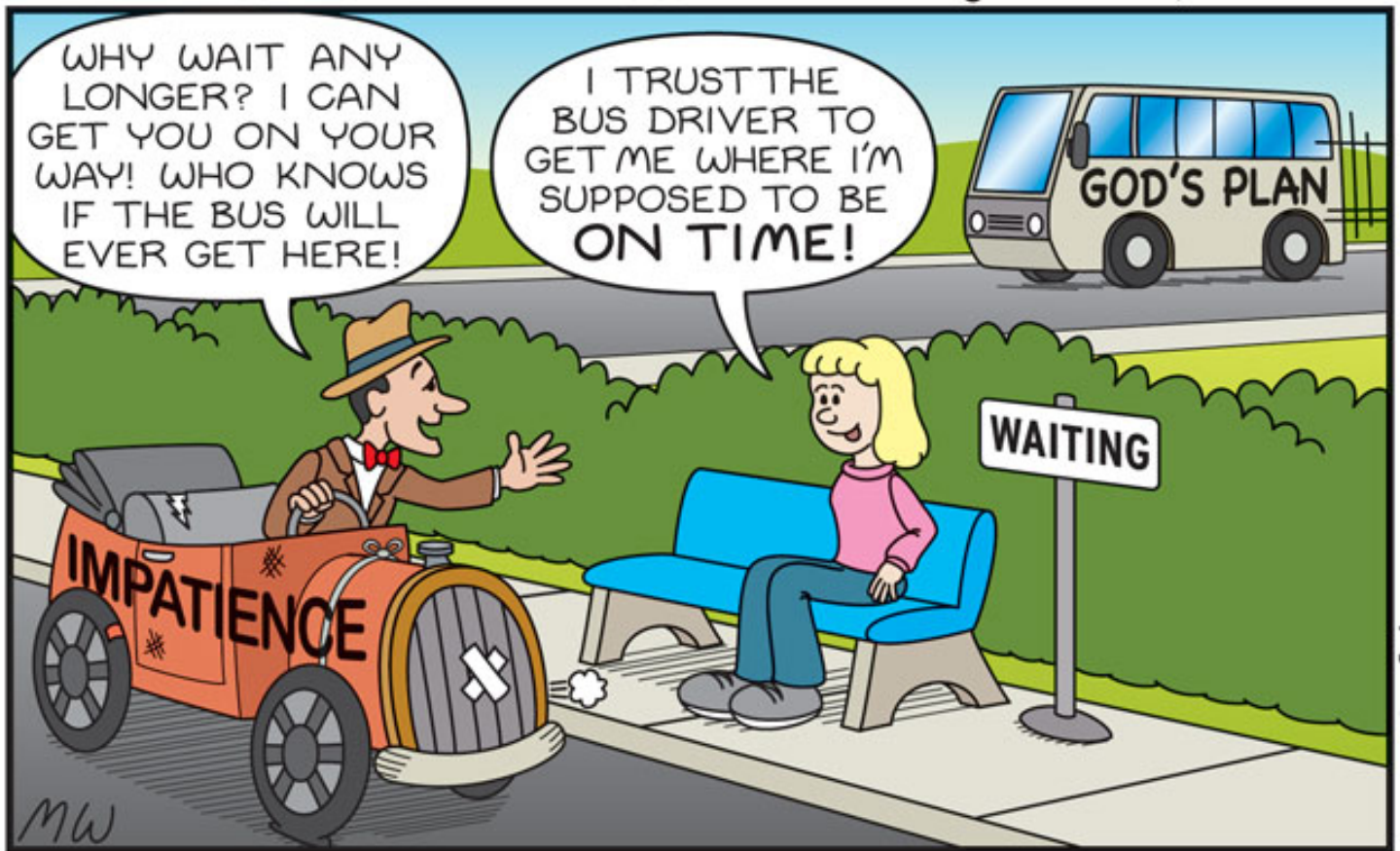
Maybe you're not sure what your special abilities are yet. Ask your parents or teachers what they think your gifts are.

Listen and watch when others compliment you or notice something good about what you're doing. To you, it might be something small but to God, it's a special and very valuable gift that only you can give. If you keep using it God will continue to make it bigger and better.

Also, try to encourage and compliment others if you notice something special in them. Your friends, teachers and parents might forget that God put something special in them and you might see it. Tell them that they're good at it and remind them that it's a special ability given to them by God.

# WAITING FOR THE BUS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



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Wait for the Lord;  
be strong and take heart  
and wait for the Lord.

– PSALM 27:14 NIV

*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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