

The Hilltopper



May 2021

From Pastor Mike

**“Better is the end of a thing than its beginning,
and the patient in spirit is better than the proud in spirit.”**

~ Ecclesiastes 7:8-9 (ESV)

Are you suffering from “COVID Burnout” today?

COVID Burnout – also known as Pandemic Exhaustion – is when we become tired of taking day-to-day preventative steps, such as washing our hands, wearing face masks, and being socially distanced.

COVID Burnout occurs because we have been trying awfully hard to stick to pandemic precautions for a long time. Isolation from friends and family can take a toll on one’s mental health. And whatever we were doing well in the early stages of the pandemic seems almost bothersome at this point.

Pandemic Exhaustion is considered to affect teenagers and young adults more severely than people of other ages. The reason is that young people’s social circles are not yet well established, so they socialize more to create or extend their relationships. That also means that they find it much more challenging to stay within their immediate social group – their families.

The latest statistics from the Virginia Department of Health show that 31% of Virginians are fully vaccinated. By the end of May, it should be around 50%. In July, we may be close to achieving herd immunity which will bring us closer to a “new” normal. Yet fatigue can set in as we wait and wait. This can create a desire to ease up on our precautions, even if they conflict with how we view the virus and its impact.

Does this sound like you? If so, you are not alone.

My COVID Burnout symptoms include asking questions like, “When can we sing again? When can we remove the face coverings? When can we finally break bread together? When can we restart our children and youth ministries?”

We are making progress toward those things, but our careful and measured approach calls for patience. If you are burned out or exhausted, patience may be in short supply even if we can see a bit of light at the end of the tunnel.

I hope you have noticed the changes incorporated into in-person worship since March. You are no longer required to pre-register for worship (but do not come to worship if you are sick). Bibles and offering envelopes are back in the pews. A printed order of worship is available when you enter the sanctuary. Children can now come forward for the children’s message. Each change suggests we are moving in the right direction.

Of course, I am exhausted and, many days, impatient, but I believe the Virginia Conference worship restrictions in place over the past 14 months have served their purpose. There is not one

documented case of COVID-19 infections in any Virginia Conference churches during the pandemic. We have been good neighbors in our community and our sacrifices have not been in vain.

I also have some news about the most recent change. We can now sing indoors (no choirs, yet, and masks are still required). That is exciting because I know how much we miss singing in worship. Each change gets us closer to the day when we will be able to take off our face coverings and give one another a hug or a handshake without worry.

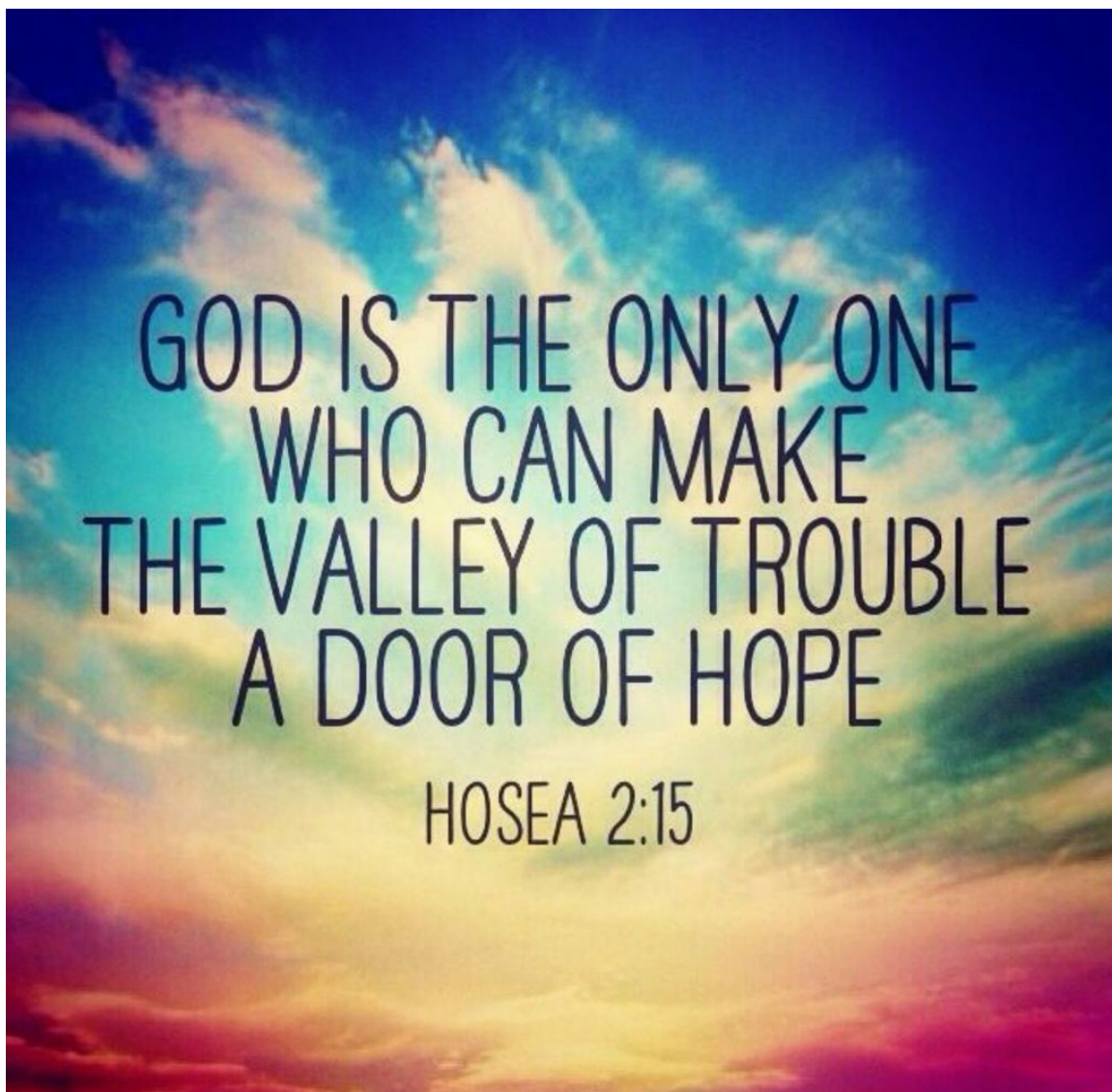
Vaccinations will help us get to the day. All people ages 16 and older can get vaccinated in Virginia and it is much easier to get an appointment now if you want one. If you need help figuring it out, let us know and we will try to help you. If you have not been vaccinated, pray about it, and talk to your primary care doctor or a health professional for answers to your concerns.

On Sunday mornings we will sing! Face coverings and social distancing requirements remain in place. However, as vaccination rates increase and infection rates drop, we can anticipate less restrictions.

I know we are ready for that day to come. Until then let us strive to be patient in spirit.

Yours in Christ.

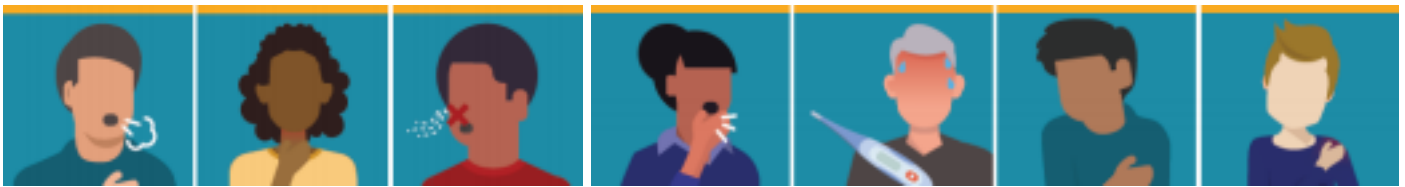
Pastor Mike



Health Acknowledgement

Welcome! We're glad you're here.

In order to keep you and other congregants safe and healthy, read and respond to the health questions below. Please affirm to the greeter that you acknowledge the following items are true for you and provide your name and contact number. All persons are required to keep physical distancing of 6 feet or more (from persons outside your household group) and to wear a face covering.



I am not experiencing two or more of the following symptoms of COVID-19:

- 1.** Fever (100 F or higher) or chills Cough Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing New loss of taste or smell Headache Muscle or body aches Sore throat Congestions or runny nose, not allergy related Nausea or vomiting Diarrhea
- 2.** I have not been in contact with anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 (see #1) or I am fully vaccinated (14 days after series of vaccinations are completed.)
- 3.** I have not tested positive for COVID-19, nor am I awaiting test results.
- 4.** If I have tested positive for COVID-19, I have complete resolution of symptoms OR (if asymptomatic) have completed 10 days of self-isolation.
- 5.** I will immediately notify the pastor if within 5 days after attending this event, I develop 2 or more symptoms of COVID-19, will avoid contact with others, and will seek medical attention.

Because We Love Emma

To All Friends of Emma;

We want to thank you for the very generous gift for *Emma's Ride*. Your contribution along with all others has far exceeded the goal that the group of ladies in the United Methodist Women's group envisioned in December 2020. Our church, New Hope UMC, participated in the Christmas (virtual) Parade at the Community Center with a decorated float, bagged snacks for family passing by in car - in addition to telling them about *Emma's Ride*. When Jason and Crissy Via were approached about *Emma's Ride*, Crissy said "we just want everyone to love Emma, and, please let this be by word-of-mouth only because this is not what we would ever expect, especially during Christmas and Covid uncertainty."

By January 2021, we realized that the circle around New Hope Village had grown, not only from the communities, but up and down the I-81, I-64 and I-95 corridors. Words cannot express the gratitude and love that has been shown for Emma and her family.

On April 1, Emma's van arrived!! It is a beautiful red Dodge wheelchair accessible (side- entrance) handicap van. The family is beginning to venture out, making it possible for Emma to look out the window and see the world around her. The following is a personal note from Jason and Crissy thanking everyone.

Dear folks,

We want to thank everyone that 'gave' to help us give Emma a van that would be easier for her to get into, and for her to be able to be more comfortable! God's love has shined through each of you!

Thanks Be To God,

~ Jason, Crissy, Emma, Isaac & Ada

In closing, the United Methodist Women want to sincerely thank all of the helping hands in our church and community that worked so hard to make *Emma's Ride* possible.

~ Peace and Love.

A Note: The complete amount of gifts collected has gone toward the purchase of the van. We have addresses for those that wrote checks, but, equally appreciated is the large amount of cash received.

As of April 19, 2021 total received was \$32,302.54.





This Event Is Sponsored By The Virginia Annual Conference UMC

Drop off Locations at:

**Grottoes United Methodist Church
300 4th Street, Grottoes, VA 24441**

**Manor Memorial United Methodist Church
9320 N. Congress Street, New Market, VA 22844**

What will we collect on the Harrisonburg District?

Non-Perishable & Canned Foods:

Each church is asked to conduct a food drive prior to Annual Conference

Modified School Kits:

1 pair of blunt scissors (round tip no plastic scissors), 1 box (24 count) crayons, 3 one-subject spiral ring notebooks, 1 pack of loose-leaf paper (100-200 pages, wide or college rule), 1 hand held pencil sharpener, 1- 12" ruler, 6 unsharpened pencils, 1- 2" eraser, 1 one-gallon resealable plastic bag.

All exterior packaging should be removed except for: the crayons and loose-leaf paper.

Modified Hygiene Kits:

1 hand towel (15" x 25" - 17" x 27" - No kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber towels), 1 washcloth - (no kitchen, cleaning, or microfiber cloths), 1 sturdy Comb with 6" of teeth (no picks, or combs with handles), 1 toenail or fingernail clipper, 1 bath sized soap (3 oz bar or larger), 1 toothbrush, 1 toothpaste (6 oz.), 10 Adhesive bandages (3/4" x 3" inches), 1 shampoo (12oz. -15 oz.),

1 one-gallon size resealable bag. *All exterior packing should be removed except for:*

the soap, toothbrush and adhesive bandages.

**Money will not need to be sent with kits,
or sent to the conference office this year for toothpaste or shipping costs.**



The following are the minutes from the **APRIL** 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 - April 22, 2021

Present: Dallas VanLear, Cindy Sheets, Kevin Armstrong, Karen Whitmer, Wanda Harding, Pastor Mike, Bruce Rogers, Alicia Copeland, Cindy Deavers, Jennifer Strother and Leon Sheets

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

The minutes from the March meeting were accepted as distributed.

Finance Report: *(Kevin Armstrong)*

- ~ Thanked Wanda Harding and Karen Whitmer for their continued efforts in counting the tithes and offerings.
- ~ April was a good month for the church's income. And it was recommended to continue to give our apportionments for April to the conference and the district.
- ~ Currently we are waiting for the church audit to be completed by Corey Johnson, we have until July 1st to get that finished.

Treasurer's Report: *(Cindy Deavers)*

- ~ April was a good month for the church's income. As of tonight's meeting, all the income has been recorded.
- ~ Under Admin Expenses: \$460 was spent on new offering envelopes, \$216 was spent on annual website hosting and \$1,000 was spent on fuel for the church.

~ Under Maintenance on the church - that was for snow removal and annual pest control. We were overcharged \$75 for the snow removal, but that will be credited to our account.

Trustees: *(Pastor Mike)*

- ~ Mike spoke to Teresa Barr about taking over as the Trustees Chair position again.
- ~ John Morse has made a to-do list of things that need to be done around the church.
- ~ They will schedule a meeting sometime in May.

Pastor's Report: *(Pastor Mike)*

- ~ Starting May 10th, Pastor Mike will take a week's vacation. May 17th, is United Methodist's Women Sunday.
- ~ Dale Rankin did an excellent job when he filled in for Pastor Mike on April 11th.
- ~ Mike is planning on having another Bible Study starting in May or June.
- ~ Under the circumstances, Mike has not been doing home visits. He has started to go back to some nursing homes to visit residents there again based on Covid-19 precautions. Mike is open to starting home visits again. He will start to call people who have not been back at church to see if they are interested in him visiting them at their homes or other locations.

Worship: *(Pastor Mike and Alicia Copeland)*

- ~ Austine will be out for 4-6 weeks for her maternity leave. Her due date is May 30th and Nancy will be here on May 30th to fill in for her. Nancy will also fill in as pianist on the first and third Sundays until Austine returns. The other Sundays Alicia will fill in as needed.

Evangelism: *(Pastor Mike)*

- ~ Nathan Kutz and Cheryl S. Bennett are working on ideas for reaching out to visitors.

United Methodist Men: *(Bruce Rogers)*

- ~ Their next meeting is Thursday, May 20th.

United Methodist Women: *(Wanda Harding)*

~ The Circle of Hope met on April 5th with 6 members present. A program from “Knitted Together for God’s Good Work” was presented. Prayer concerns and prayers were shared as well as reminders of upcoming activities and events. They discussed their plans for serving the homeless breakfast at Basic UMC on Saturday, April 24th. And they discussed their plans for the United Methodist Women’s Sunday on May 16th. Their next meeting will be on May 3rd at 7:00pm.

~ The Circle of Love met on April 13th with 8 members present. A program on “Being Bright in the Corner Where You Are” that focused on scripture from Micah 6:8. They discussed how they can assist in relieving hunger in our community. They talked about programs at the Society of St. Andrew and other food banks. They discussed their plans for helping with the homeless breakfast at Basic UMC. They also discussed other upcoming events and had prayer concerns. An idea for a fundraiser was discussed and it was suggested that they participate in the Community Yard Sale at the New Hope Community Center on May 1st. All the proceeds from the yard sale will go towards the circle’s budget for missions. Susan Mehler will set up a table early Saturday morning and if anyone wants to contribute any items, they can drop the items off there. The Yard Sale will be from 8am-12pm. Their next meeting will be on May 11, 2021 at 7:00pm.

~ Sisters of Faith’s first meeting on the year will be on Tuesday, May 4th at 1:30pm at the church pavilion.

Staff/Parish Relations: *(Pastor Mike)*

~ Their next meeting has been changed to Tuesday, May 25th

Membership: *(Karen Whitmer)*

~ David Riner, who was part of our church family passed away on April 11, 2021.

~ Morene Morris who passed away on Tuesday, March 23rd was a member of our church in 1972.

Lay Leader: *(Jennifer Strother)*

~ Jennifer will be preaching at other churches on May 2nd, May 23rd and June 13th - Kim Maugans and Dale Rankin will fill in for her on these days. And on May 16th, JoEtta Walker will be our Lay Leader during Worship Service for United Methodist Women’s Sunday.

Communication: *(Cindy Sheets)*

~ The back tv monitor is not working. Kevin Armstrong will take a look at it and try to see what is going wrong with it.

New Business:

~ Bruce stated his appreciation for the thank you letter for the Emma's Ride Project donations. He thanked the women of the church for leading this project and making it such a huge success for Emma and her family. As of April 19, 2021 - \$32,303.54 was collected for the van. Wanda noted that another \$700 has been collected that was not reflected in the previous amount stated.

~ Leon Sheets wanted to address the issue of Sunday School Teachers as we move forward and open up more in the future. Judy Riner will continue as our Pre-K teacher. JoEtta Walker has agreed to come back as our 1st & 2nd grade teacher - although if someone is interested in teaching the class in the future, JoEtta will be willing to help them take over the class. After over 20 years, Becky Tate has decided not to return to the 3rd, 4th & 5th grade class. She is more than willing to help anyone who is interested to get started and take over the class. And she will help someone new continue with the Heifer Project as well. We are still in need of a Nursery teacher. And we would like to have at least 2 substitutes that we could call on if one of the other teachers will be out.

Dallas thanked everyone for doing what they do to keep the church running; and closed the meeting; and Pastor Mike sent us off with a prayer. The meeting ended at 7:16pm.

Respectfully submitted by:
Cynthia Sheets
Recording Secretary

The next Church Council Meeting will be on Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 6:30pm.

Upcoming Events, Activities and Meetings **at New Hope UMC - MAY 2021**

Saturday, May 1st ~ Community Yard Sale at Community Center 8am-12pm (*donations will be for benefit of The Circle of Love budget*)

Monday, May 3rd ~ Circle of Hope @ 7:00pm

Tuesday, May 4th ~ Sisters of Faith @ 1:30pm at the church pavillion

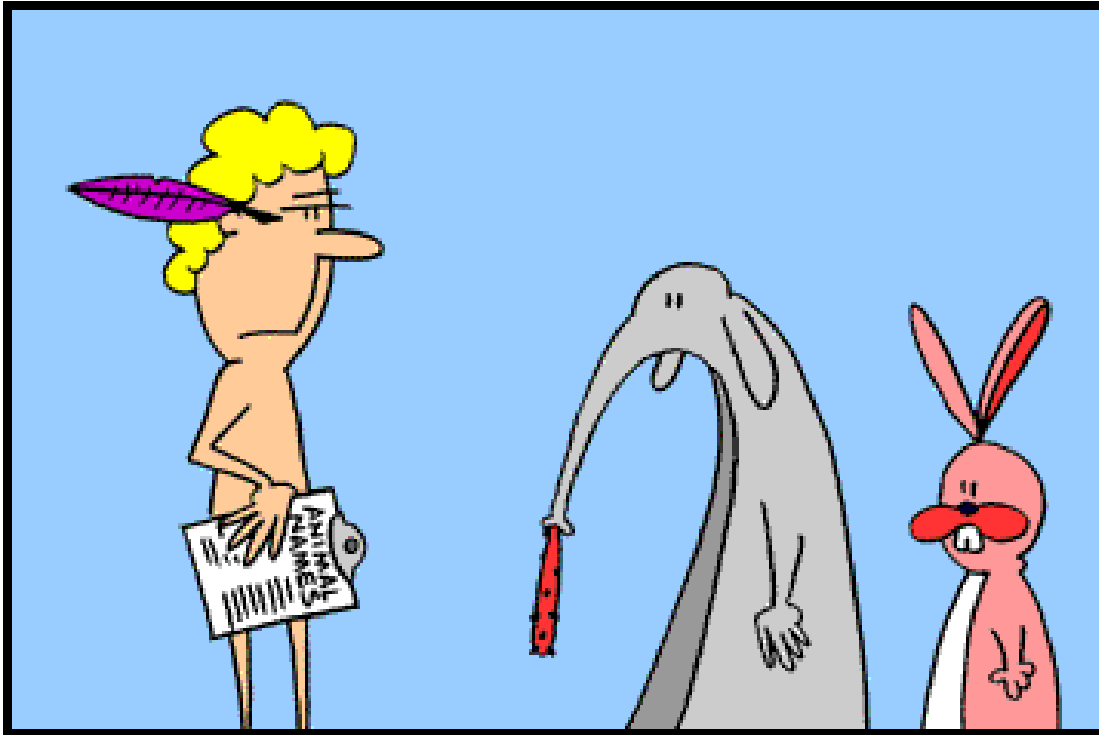
Tuesday, May 11th ~ Circle of Love @ 7:00pm

Sunday, May 16th ~ United Methodist Women's Sunday @ 10:30am

Thursday, May 20th ~ United Methodist Men meeting @ 6:30pm

Tuesday, May 25th ~ Staff/Parish Relations Committee meeting @ 7:00pm

Thursday, May 27th ~ Church Council Meeting @ 6:30pm



(See Genesis 2:18-25)

06-19-1998

AFTER JUST STRUGGLING TO PICK NAMES FOR THE PLATYPUS, THE AUK, THE RHINOCEROS AND THE GIBBON, ADAM WAS NOT IN THE MOOD TO WASTE MUCH THOUGHT ON THIS "EATER OF ANTS"

How do groups of angels greet each other?

Halo,

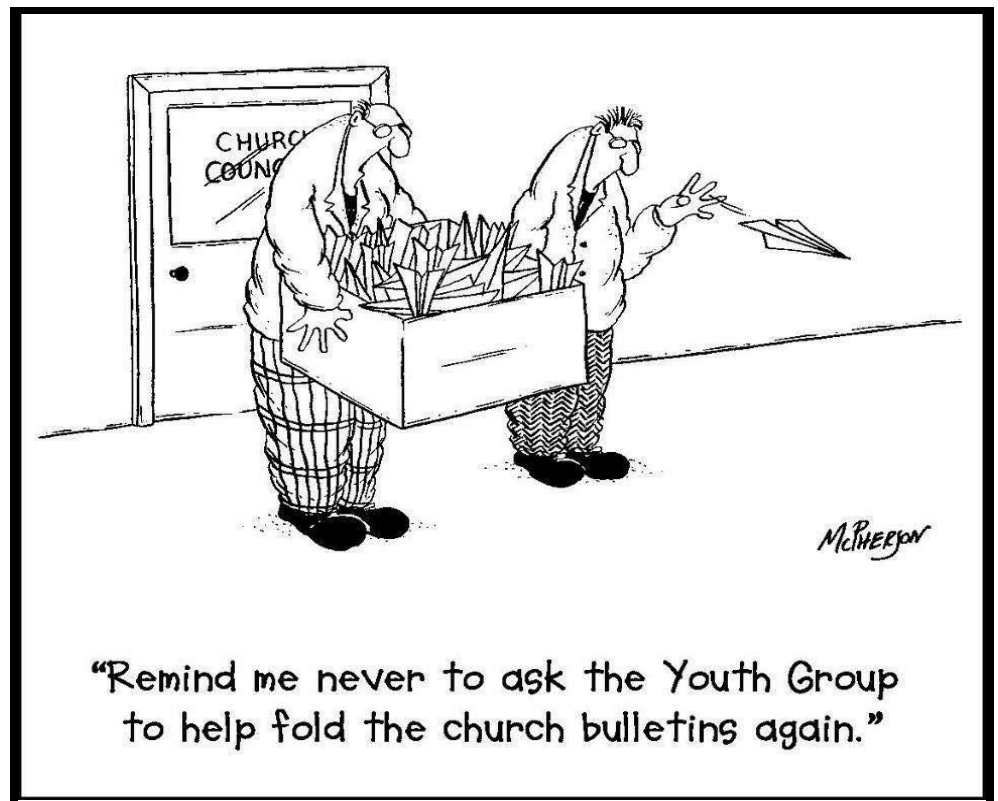
Halo,

Halo

Who was the best business woman in the Bible?

Pharaoh's daughter...

She went down to the bank of the Nile and drew out a little Prophet



Good Days

Would you rather have good days or bad days? I know the answer to that question, but here is another question for you: do you know how to have good days? Many people pursue good days and never find them because they run in the wrong direction. God's Word holds the secret to good days. Peter tells us in first Peter 3:10-12,

“He who would love the life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking deceit...” good days begin with our speech and how we talk to those around us. So, “Let your speech always be with the grace, season with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one” (Col. 4:6).

Peter continues, “Let him (who would see good days) turn from evil and do good.”

You see, “Whatever a man sows he will also reap” (Gal. 6:7). So do good to have good days.

Finally, Peter adds, “Let him (who would say good days) seek peace and pursue it.” A peaceful day is a good day, so, “If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men” (Romans 12:18).

If you will do these things your days will be good, and as an added bonus, God will hear your prayers!

~ Alton Norman





Birthdays & Anniversaries

2 - Jarman Fretwell

3 - Francis Stout

5 - Linda Howdysshell


6 - Lindsay Bell
- Kevin McLaren
- Chad Deavers

7 - Jerry Coffman
- Deborah Umidi

8 - Teresa Hester

9 - Keith Stogdale

10 - Melissa Fretwell

12 - Abby Killough
 - Corey & Sandy Johnson

13 - Patrick Gruber

14 - Kimberly Campbell

15 - Cheryl S. Bennett

16 - Pam VanLear

18 - Nancy Hutchinson
- Laura Shiflett

19 - Michael Shreckhise

22 - Randall Herman


 - Mike & Roxann Canipe

23 - Michaela Craun
- Alden Hough
- Michael Sundeen

 - Debbie & Sam Arnold


26 - Candi Dunlap
- Betty Selmon

27 - Patty Morris
- Jason Pace

28 - Jeremy Kraisser
 - Mark & Robin Craun

 - Jim & Betty Gruber

29 - Samantha Brensinger
- Steve Morris
- David Taylor

30 - Jeff Bosserman
 - Martha & Jarman Fretwell

31 - Carolyn Steele

Christ the Solid Rock

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.” (*Matthew 7:24-27 ESV*)

There is so much that can be said about this scripture. Honestly when I read it now it gives me great hope, however for a long time in my life I didn't match up to it. I spent the first 31 years of my life building a house on the sand. Many times storms would come and damage the house. Over and over again I would repair what was damaged and it would work for a while, but it just seemed like no matter what, nothing I could do could permanently fix it. I began to feel extremely exhausted because I knew I wasn't doing it right. Every time I did things in life the way I thought was best they simply would not last. When I surrendered to Jesus Christ and told him I was done doing things my way and would give my all to him and live the way his word tells me to, I found my house was finally on the solid rock of God.

I will be honest though when I look at our country I feel a lot of pressure to try to tell as many as possible about this passage. I think anyone here in America can tell it doesn't seem like there is a solid place to stand anymore. Our foundation today isn't stationary, year after year it seems to move like the sand at the seashore. The reason why there are so many church buildings in America is because at one time a portion of the people of this great nation tried to build this country on the solid rock of Christ. If we are all honest with ourselves in that time there was more certainty in our country at large. We had a trust in something bigger than us, and we had a greater feeling of security because of it. I'm not saying that being in a church building will change everything. But I do think that getting back to hearing the words of our Savior and actually doing them will really make the difference. In John 14:6 it says, “Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” I truly believe things will improve in our country if we finally realize that we are all the same, and we are all in need of the same salvation. Whether you've been a Christian for all your life, or you're honestly not sure who Jesus really is, I really invite you to read and listen to his words. They truly really will change your life. His words are in Bibles and I know they are simply books of paper, but the words that are written in them have outlasted empires, they are stronger than stones that have built castles. He will pick up your house of life and put it on a foundation that will stand the test of time. I truly believe only this will fix us and our country. And it is a free gift, it comes by repentance of our sins. If you let Jesus Christ change your life I promise you will never regret it.



Have no fear, please be encouraged.

Thank you and we pray that all of you are blessed,

Nathan Kutz & Cheryl S. Bennett

Real Life Heavenly Hands

Kids' Corner - The Lost Sheep

By: LeAnne Guenther

BibleWise



Bringing Home the Lost Sheep

This week we are going to learn about another parable. Do you remember what a parable is? It's a story Jesus told to teach a lesson. The story should be easy to remember and will have a special meaning for us to learn from.

This is the parable of the lost sheep. Jesus started by telling the story to men called tax collectors and Pharisees. These were men who thought they were more important than everyone else and they weren't very nice. They were whispering about Jesus

and how he shouldn't eat and talk with sinners. It's funny they would say that because we all are sinners, we all do things we shouldn't.

The tax collectors and Pharisees thought that they were better than everyone else. In fact, they didn't think they had to repent or say sorry to God for their mistakes.

Have you ever felt really bad for something you've done? Maybe you've hit your brother or sister and afterwards you wished you hadn't. When you really feel sorry for something and tell that person you are sorry, that is what we do when we repent.

Just like with our family we need to feel bad and say sorry to God when we've done something wrong. The Pharisees and tax collectors didn't think that they had to do this because they were so important.

Of course Jesus knew what they were thinking, so he told this parable:

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine sheep and go find the one sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he is so excited he carries the sheep all the way home. Then he phones all his friends and neighbors and has a party to celebrate the sheep that was found.

Then Jesus told what the parable meant: Just like there was a big party over the one lost sheep, there will be a big party in heaven over just one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine people who think they are perfect and don't need to repent.

Just imagine, when you say "your sorry" to God all of heaven has a big party just for what you've done! God is much more excited when we say we're sorry than when we act like nothing has happened and don't think we need to repent at all.

But you know, Jesus just kept going and he told another parable. Listen and see if this sounds like something you've already heard.

Suppose a woman has ten dollar coins and loses one. Does she not turn on all her lights, sweep the whole house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she finds it, she calls all her friends and neighbors and has a party to celebrate finding the lost coin.

Just like the lost coin, there is great joy with all of God's angels over one sinner who repents.

I think the lesson here is that nobody is perfect (except God of course). It's very important that when we make a mistake we realize we have done something wrong and we tell God we're sorry. It's as simple as taking a couple minutes, going somewhere quiet would be best (but you can talk to God anywhere), and just say you're sorry for the wrong thing you've done and ask God to forgive you.

When you ask God to forgive you He immediately erases the mistake from His mind and He won't think of it again. It's pretty easy, huh?! Just think how happy God will be when you do it ,and you'll feel better too!



Sermons by Phone

Hear Pastor Mike's
Weekly Sermon

1-877-369-1437



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

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