

# *New Hope United Methodist Church's Monthly Newsletter*

## **The Hilltopper**



## **August 2023**

### *From Pastor Mike*

After spending the last ten months examining the current state of the United Methodist Church and discerning its future path, New Hope United Methodist Church has a Called Church Conference (CCC) scheduled for Tuesday, August 29, 2023, at 7:30 p.m.

Please take time to read the official notice which is included in The Hilltopper for more details about the CCC.

This vote will determine the future direction of New Hope Church. All professing members present at the CCC are eligible to vote. Please attend the Thursday, August 3 Council meeting if you need more information about the CCC and its implications.

The February 19, 2023, straw poll indicated that this church was not of one mind on disaffiliation (55% disaffiliate / 45% remain UMC). The vote at the CCC will settle the matter of whether to disaffiliate from the UMC. A majority vote of 66.67% or more of those professing members in attendance at the CCC is required for the vote to pass.

I lament the fact that we are in this place. However, our church leadership believes an official vote is necessary for the church to move forward one way or another.

And here we are.

Yours in Christ,  
*Pastor Mike*

# **Announcement of a Called Church Conference**

Over the last several months, our church family has engaged in an intentional and prayerful discernment regarding our continued affiliation with The United Methodist Church. The results of that discernment have led us to work with the District Superintendent and Conference Trustees to facilitate our church's disaffiliation from The United Methodist Church. The next step in that process is a vote of the Professing Members of our church regarding the Disaffiliation Agreement that would facilitate the separation of our church from The United Methodist Church. The key terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement will be presented at the Called Church Conference prior to the vote.

There will be a Called Church Conference of the New Hope United Methodist Church on Tuesday, August 29, 2023, at 7:30 p.m. in the church (55 Round Hill School Road, Fort Defiance, VA). The purpose of this Called Church Conference is to vote on the Disaffiliation Agreement between our church and the Virginia Conference Trustees and to affirm our desire to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Denomination. All are welcome to attend, but only Professing Members of New Hope United Methodist Church who are present at this meeting are eligible to vote. The meeting will be presided over by District Superintendent Rev. Victor Gomez.

Following a 2/3 affirmative vote, New Hope United Methodist Church will deliver the Disaffiliation Agreement, signed by the church's Trustees, to the Conference Trustees along with a small deposit. The Disaffiliation Agreement then will need to be approved and ratified by the Annual Conference at a session to be held virtually on Saturday, October 7, 2023, at 9:00 a.m. at which time the Disaffiliation Agreement will become binding. After ratification, and once all legal details have been completed in accordance with the terms of the Disaffiliation Agreement, the disaffiliation will become effective. At this time, a consensus has not been reached on whether to affiliate with the Global Methodist Church, Free Methodist, or become Independent.



Due to the Vacation Bible School schedule, our July Church Council meeting was rescheduled to August 3, 2023. The minutes of this meeting will be available in the September Hilltopper.



- 1 - Taylor Meier
- 2 - Amye and Tim Bergman 
- 3 - Lewis Whitmer
- 5 - Michael Harner
- 6 - Melanie Aldhizer
- 7 - John DeJong, Susan Mehler
- 8 - Charles Powers
- 9 - Monique Houser
- 11 - Carolyn Fretwell, Weston Powell
- 12 - Greg Killough, Savannah Ritchie
- 13 - Mary Taylor, Linda Wheatley
- 14 - Mike Stout
- 15 - Judith Howard
- 17 - Hunter Black, Isaac Via

- 18 - Vanessa Harner
- 19 - Mitch Brensinger
- 19 - Glenwood and Kerri Fretwell 
- 20 - Stoney Caricofe
- 21 - Bianca Brensinger
- 22 - Randall Hinebaugh
- 23 - Nathan Kutz
- 23 - George and Mary Taylor 
- 25 - Harry Fisher
- 26 - Julia Miller
- 27 - Karen Maugans, Michael Kelly

# Is The Church Broken?

You hear comments in Bible classes that amount to what's wrong with the church, what we're doing wrong, what we're not doing, and what it's doing to us, our children, and the world. You read people's minds through their social media rants, raves, and ramblings, and the bottom line message is that the church is inept, irrelevant, irresponsible, or, worse, insidious. To hear some tell it, the church is not only unhelpful, but actually hurtful. I know that we can be prone to say things out of hurt, disappointment, anger, and bitterness, but the words themselves are no less potent even if influenced by such emotions.

Is the contention, as one Christian sister put it, that "the church is broken," true? Another way to put that is, "Are elders, preachers, deacons, Bible class teachers, and every other Christian broken?" Perhaps we impersonalize it and overly-institutionalize it with a nameless, faceless designation of "church." But the church is, as we were taught as children, "the people." People who are prone to say the right thing at the wrong time, the wrong thing at the right time, and, sadly, the wrong thing at the wrong time. We disappoint, we mishandle, we poorly execute, we unfairly judge and criticize, and we simply blow it. That is definitely not an excuse or a permission slip for bad behavior. Yet, it is not likely to ever change.

Because the church is made up of sinners saved by grace, the church is broken. We who are quick to condemn the church as broken need to face that we ourselves, as those placed by Christ into that church when we were saved, are broken, too. Show me the perfect person who never mishandles a situation, never sins with tongue, attitude, or deed, and I'll show you someone who will stand before Christ at the Judgment saved on the basis of their own merit and goodness. That won't happen.

Let's be reminded of what the church is. It is the precious, beloved bride of Christ (Eph. 5:22-25; Rev. 19:7; 21:2). It is that institution purchased by His very life's blood (Acts 20:28). It is that which was thought up by God from eternity before time as is the expression of His manifold wisdom (Eph. 3:9-11). It is the place where Christ is glorified (Eph. 3:21; 5:27). It is the present the Son will present to His Father when time is no more (1 Cor. 15:24). It is that and truly so much more.

**God designed the church. Reckless criticism of it, is reckless criticism of Him. All of us should be determined to improve in every area of our spiritual lives, to be for others what we need to be, to conquer faults and sins in our lives. We should also extend to others the grace we intensely desire to receive when we stand before the King on the last day!**

**Yes, the church is broken, but not in the sense that it cannot help, serve, minister, love, and encourage. Let each of us strive to be the church we want the church to be. Model and exemplify it. Emit the fragrance of Christ. That way, the broken church can help mend the broken lives that make it up.**



Thanks to Terry Cook (See Exodus 32) 01-13-2003

YES MOSES ... I'VE HEARD THE SAYING  
"RULES ARE MEANT TO BE BROKEN"

Visiting his grandparents, a small boy opened the big family Bible. He was fascinated as he fingered through the old pages. Suddenly, something fell out. He picked it up and found that it was an old leaf that had been pressed flat between the pages. "Mama, look what I found," he called out.

"What have you got there, dear?" his mother asked."

With astonishment in his voice, the boy answered, "I think it's Adam's underwear!"

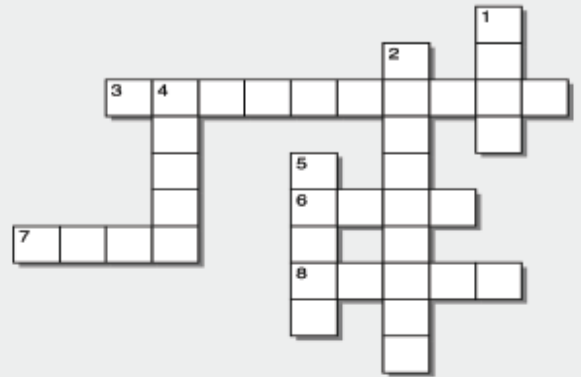
**The Sunday School teacher was describing that when Lot's wife looked back at Sodom she turned into a pillar of salt, when Bobby interrupted. "My mommy looked back once while she was driving," he announced, "and she turned into a telephone pole."**

Going over our church finances I found a receipt from a local paint store signed by someone named Christian. I wasn't aware of anyone buying paint, so I called the store to point out its mistake.

"I'm sorry," I told the manager, "but there are no Christians here at our church."



# ⚔️ CrossWORD



## "Adam's Family"

Genesis 5

### Across

- 3) Lived 969 years.
- 6) First man.
- 7) Adam's son that replaced Abel.
- 8) Methuselah's father.

### Down

- 1) Son of Lamech who would built a ship.
- 2) A book that lists family members.
- 4) Son of Seth
- 5) Enoch's father.

BulletinDigest.com



# Donations for August

Collecting **Bagged or Canned Beans**  
and **Granola Bars**



To help people in our local communities, through local agencies, such as: the Verona Food Pantry, the Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, the Valley Mission, and the Open Doors Shelter in Harrisonburg.



Contact Nathan  
and Cheryl Kutz  
(202) 495-1346



# Try Something New

Let me ask you a question...when was the last time you tried something new? I mean something really new. Something out of the box, something extraordinary, something that took you out of your comfort zone. I recently started an online little boys' boutique called Lane & Lee. I found an area in retail that is sometimes lacking. Ever since my oldest son was little, I would walk in big box stores and not be able to find hardly anything that looked cute and would be functional for his lifestyle. In my opinion, it's the same way now as it was then. So, that's why I made Lane and Lee. It's an online shop with the convenience of simply clicking a few buttons for parents, grandparents, other family members, and friends to buy these pieces that are fun and functional, and look great together for the little boys in their lives. A bonus of my shop is that 10% of all our monthly proceeds will go towards our donation ministry. It's definitely been a fun, exciting, and learning experience.

I tried something new. I stepped outside of the box. I did something that in all honesty I wasn't qualified for. I don't have a business degree and quite frankly, I know nothing about running a business. I was terrified and still am of how this business adventure will all play out. Will I be successful or will I be one of the 80-90% of online shops that fail has crossed my mind about a million times since I started this journey. But, I had this little idea in my head, I took it to God and put all my faith in him that this would be a dream come true. We're only a few days in of being officially open online and so far, so good.

"Now the angel of the Lord came and sat under the terebinth at Ophrah, which belonged to Joash the Abiezerite, while his son Gideon was beating out wheat in the winepress to hide it from the Midianites. And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor." And the Lord turned to him and said, "Go in this might of yours and save Israel from the hand of Midian; do not I send you?" And he said to him, "Please, Lord, how can I save Israel? Behold, my clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my father's house." And the Lord said to him, "But I will be with you, and you shall strike the Midianites as one man." (Judges 6:11-12, 14-16 ESV)

The Lord comes and calls Gideon, as he is trying to hide grain from the Midianites that ironically, the Lord is going to appoint him to conquer. He is very doubtful because of his situation and his family status in their tribe of Israel. But God still calls him a mighty warrior and tells him that he will destroy the Midianites. He proves to Gideon through a sign that he will keep his word.

Later, God takes Gideon's army of 32,000 men down to 300 men after testing them by how they drink water out of a stream. Purposefully, so that Israel does not brag that they won their own freedom. He intentionally gave Gideon a miniature army against impossible odds through human eyes to show how he is the LORD over all.

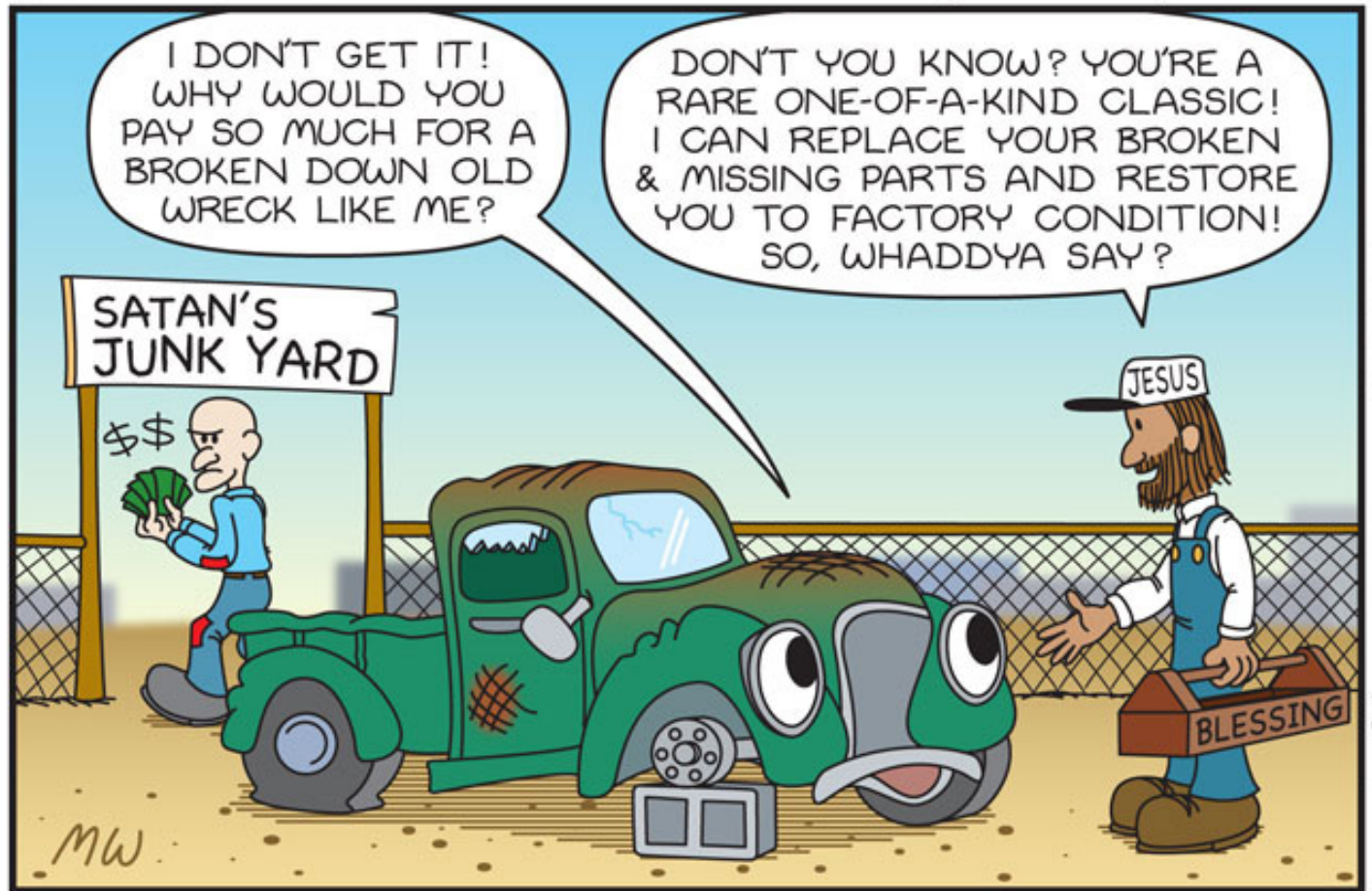
God used Gideon and blessed him. Through him Israel was freed against impossible odds. After Gideon was gone, they did go back to home in their old ways, but he trusted the Lord and followed through with something new.

Gideon took a leap of faith and trusted God. On a very different note, I did the same and have several times before in my life. So, would you be willing to step outside of your comfort zone? Try something new and trust God wholeheartedly? Give it a try. This month try something new. Maybe it's something you thought about before, maybe it's something you never imagined doing, maybe it's making new friends, maybe it's starting a new hobby, maybe it's finally trying for that dream or ultimate goal that seems to be so far out of reach. Take the leap! Let go, let God! See how God will transform new into amazing, incredible, and unbelievable to help serve him better.

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

# SALVAGER

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



© 2010 Michael D. Waters

www.joyfultoons.com

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

— LUKE 19:10 NIV

***If you would like to add an article or announcement  
to the Hilltopper, please contact us! Call/Text: (540) 280-1860 or email  
NewHopeUMC.Virginia@gmail.com***

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)

***NewHopeUMC.online***

***Facebook & Instagram: @MyNewHopeUMC***