



***From Pastor Mike***

Dear Beloved of our New Hope United Methodist Church Family,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

As we approach the Advent season, a time of anticipation and reflection, I am filled with gratitude for each one of you and the journey we have shared. Disaffiliation dominated much of the year and left us divided. I miss those who left our fellowship after the vote was taken, but I am thankful for those who remain as we move forward together. It has undoubtedly been a challenging year for our congregation, but in the spirit of Advent, let us focus on the hope and renewal this season brings.

In the face of adversity, we have witnessed the resilience of our faith community. The decision to remain in this Body of Christ, despite the challenges we faced, speaks volumes about our commitment to the teachings of Jesus and the love that binds us together. It is a testament to our shared belief that, in Christ, we find strength and purpose.

I am encouraged by the signs of new life in our church. People are stepping up to lead this body of Christ into a new day. Our leadership positions are being filled with new faces. New friends are joining us on Sunday mornings.

As we navigate this new chapter in our church's history, remember the core values that unite us — love, compassion, and a shared mission to spread the Good News. Advent invites us to prepare our hearts for the arrival of the Prince of Peace, and in doing so, we can foster a spirit of unity and understanding within our church.

During this season, let us also draw inspiration from the hymns, carols, and scriptures that have guided us throughout the years. Our shared love for music can serve as a powerful source of inspiration and connection. As we worship together, may the melodies and lyrics remind us of the harmony we seek as a community.

I am confident that, with the faith of Christ as our guide, we can turn challenges into opportunities for growth and transformation. Let us embrace this Advent season with open hearts, knowing that the light of Christ shines brightly even amid uncertainty.

As we reflect on our journey, I am reminded of Isaiah 41:10, which says, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." May these words be a source of comfort and assurance as we move forward together.

Together, as one Body of Christ, let us move forward with hope, love, and a renewed sense of purpose. May this Advent be a time of joyful anticipation, where we draw closer to God and one another.

Yours in Christ,  
*Pastor Mike*

# CHRISTMAS PARADE

## New Hope Christmas Parade

Friday, December 8th @ 6pm

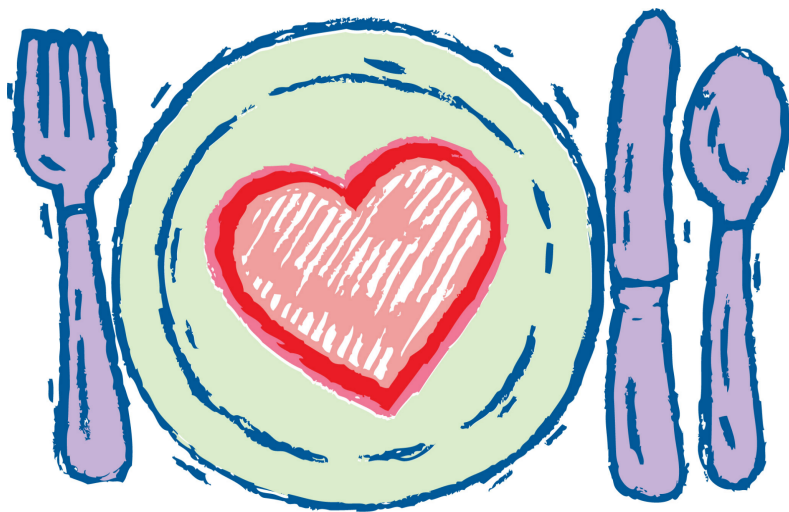
The parade takes place along Battlefield Road through New Hope. Lineup begins at 5pm at New Hope UMC. After the parade, people are invited to the New Hope Community

Center for pictures with Santa, cookie decorating, games for the kids, food, lights and more!



*Community Dinner  
at New Hope UMC*

*Wednesday,  
December 20th  
@ 5:30pm*



**COMMUNITY DINNER**



The following are the minutes from the **NOVEMBER** meeting of the Church Council.

The minutes are available to help the entire church family *stay in the know* about how this group is caring for New Hope UMC!

## **Church Council Meeting Minutes - November 30, 2023**

Present: Kevin Armstrong, Becky Breeding, Alicia Copeland, Cindy Deavers, Wanda Harding, Linda Howdysshell, Corey Johnson, Bill Lalla, Pastor Mike, Bruce Rogers, Cindy Sheets, Karen Whitmer and chairperson Dallas VanLear

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Dallas Van Lear, and Cindy Sheets read a devotional from the Upper Room and prayed.

The minutes to the October meeting were passed by all as presented.

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

- Our budget for 2024 will be changing slightly because of a \$876 drop in apportionments. Kevin made a motion to make the change to this 2024 budget, Dallas seconded it and it was passed by all.
- Giving for the month was around \$10,000.
- For the end of the year donations: Kevin made a motion to make donations in the following amounts: \$120 to the District Board of Missions, \$500 to the Verona Food Pantry, \$500 to the Valley Mission, and \$2,500 to the WRE - Weekday Religious Education.
- The Finance Committee is in part responsible to help raise money to pay the bills, etc. The committee will meet in January to discuss creative ways to do this with other committee chairpersons.

## **Treasurer:** *(Cindy Deavers reported)*

- Cindy Deavers explained the information, what is included and how to correctly read the monthly treasurer's report for the committee members.
- After the committee was made aware that we have a number of small funds sitting under utilized - Becky made a motion to take the money from the Korea Trip Fund (\$150), the Missions Fund (\$100), the Ethel White Mouse Ministry Fund (\$50) and the 50's Drive-In Fund (\$1,293) - totaling \$1,593 - to go back into the General Fund and to be used for the end of year donations that Kevin discussed early. We will also speak with Jennifer Strother about how best to handle the money that we are currently holding in the Jennifer Strother Seminary Fund (\$668). Kevin seconded the motion and it was passed by all.
- Cindy Deavers also pointed out that we have \$7,932.15 in non-designated funds still available for us to use as the committee deems necessary.
- There are also additional funds that were discussed and made a motion on.... The Eutsler Education Fund (\$1,152.92); the Local Missions Fund (\$345.37); and the Organ Fund (\$239.78). And Pastor Mike said that we could comfortably move \$2,000 out of the Minister Moving Expenses Fund. Becky made a motion to move all of these funds - including \$2,500 out of the Minister Moving Expenses Fund - into the General Fund to be used as the committee deems necessary. Corey seconded the motion and it was passed by all.
- The bills and payroll have been paid for November.
- A \$1,000 donation was received for the Minister's Discretionary Fund.
- Anyone who wants Cindy Deavers to go over the Treasurer's Report, she is happy to meet with them anytime to do that.

## **Finance Secretary:** *(Becky Breeding reported)*

- 2024 Offering Envelopes are out in the Narthex. If you don't see your name, please ask Becky Breeding.

## **Trustees:** *(Corey Johnson reported)*

- We have not had any damage due to the current cold streak.
- Corey said that the cemetery plots we have now are well below the national average, so he made a motion to raise the cemetery plots to \$1,000 for members and \$1,500 for non-members; effective January 1, 2024.

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

- The driveway easement on the parking lot across the street from the church will be getting gravel, and this is being paid by the owners of the home across the street.
- We had three members attend the Charge Conference on November 12th.
- We have 11 people participating in the Advent Bible Study.
- Since the last church council meeting, \$1,275 has been added to the Discretionary Fund.
- We will have only one service on Christmas Eve morning; due to staff concerns and other factors.
- The Sanctuary will be getting decorated on Saturday, December 2nd at 11am. The Chrismon Tree should be up by then. A pizza party will follow the decorating.
- Nominations: Becky Breeding will be our new Church Council Chairperson starting in January. And Bill Lalla will be our new Lay Leader in January. There are still a number of open positions. Pastor Mike made a motion to receive the Nominations Report, Dallas seconded it, and it was passed by all.



## **UM Men:** *(Bill Lalla reported)*

- Darryl has a neighbor who may need some help that the UMM could help that person with, and that would generate some money for the UMM.
- The UMM are looking to see if they can work to get the tree in front of the Sanctuary cut down themselves without having to pay a third party.
- The UMM donated \$1,000 to the Minister's Discretionary Fund.

## **UM Women:** *(Wanda Harding reported)*

- The Circle of Hope and the Circle of Love will meet jointly on Monday, December 4th at 6:30pm.
- The Sisters of Faith will meet on Monday, December 4th for lunch.
- The Kingsway Prison Ministry has a mission opportunity. They are needing 6 oz tubes of toothpaste. Please bring them to the church and LeVerene will deliver those items.

## **Staff Parish Relations:**

- They will have an end of the year meeting on Wednesday, December 20th.

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

- Luella Jean Walker was born on Friday, November 24th, 2023. Her parents are Josh and Sarah Walker, and her grandparents are Jack and Joetta Walker.
- So far this year, there have been: 2 births, 4 deaths and 2 members transferred into our church.

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

- \$2,331 was deposited into the Youth account after the 50's Drive-In. Of that amount \$1,810 was profit from the event. Currently there is \$2,552.09 in the Youth account.
- There is also a need for someone else to be added to this Youth bank account, if anyone is interested please see Cindy Sheets or Pastor Mike.

- Dallas thanked everyone and was appreciative for their leadership during his time as church council chair. And we all thanked him for his dedication and service during these difficult past few years.

Pastor Mike prayed and the meeting ended at 7:43pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Cynthia Sheets

Recording Secretary



*Next meeting will be Thursday, January 25th, 2024 at 6:30pm*



# Christmas Eve Family Worship

*with Holy Communion*

## **Christmas Eve Morning Worship**

“We Welcome the Light of Christ”

*Come and worship together and greet the Christ Child, sent from heaven to earth.*

Sunday, December 24 at 10:30 a.m.

- ◆ Lessons and Carols ◆ Skit: The Christmas Light ◆ Children’s Time ◆
- ◆ Brief Message ◆ Holy Communion ◆

### **Skit: “The Christmas Light”**

Angela the Christmas Angel, Dasher the Dog, Sorry the Sheep, and a Lost Shepherd try to find Dasher the Dog’s lost frisbee which has turned into the Christmas star.

We will need four cast members – two teens or adults, and two children.  
Practice for the skit will be scheduled once our cast members are in place.

“We Welcome the Light Of Christmas” will be a memorable worship experience in the hearts of those seeking to grow closer to Jesus, the true Light of the World.

***This will be the only worship opportunity at New Hope on Sunday, December 24th. Our staff thanks you for understanding so they can spend time with their families.***



# December

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

2 - Sofia Belsky, Robin Craun

3 - Carl Lambert

6 - Chrissy Via, Karen Whitmer

13 - Jake & Julie Botkin ♥

13 - Jason & Chrissy Via ♥

14 - Karleigh Howdyshehl, Layla Taylor

16 - B. F. Caricofe III, Carrie Marshall, Paul Whitmer, Shelvie Critzer

17 - Kim Maugans, Tim & Suzanne Lank ♥

18 - Jason Via

21 - Emily Howdyshehl

23 - Julie Botkin

25 - B. F. Caricofe

26 - Carl Caricofe

30 - Kim & Karen Maugans ♥

31 - Andrew & Dana Breeding ♥

## Donations for December

Collecting **6 oz. Toothpaste** to help people through the Kingsway Prison Ministry





# DECEMBER

## Upcoming Activities, Events and Meetings at New Hope UMC

**Saturday, December 2** ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

~ Christmas Choir Practice @ 9:00am

~ Sanctuary Decorating for Advent @ 11:00am

**Sunday, December 3** ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ First Sunday of Advent @ 10:30am

**Monday, December 4** ~ Sisters of Faith Meeting @ 12:00pm

~ Circle of Hope and Circle of Love Meeting @ 6:30pm

**Friday, December 8** ~ New Hope Christmas Parade @ 6:00pm

**Saturday, December 9** ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

**Sunday, December 10** ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

**Sunday, December 17** ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

**Saturday, December 16** ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

**Wednesday, December 20** ~ Staff Parish Relations Committee @ 6:30pm

**Saturday, December 23** ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

**Sunday, December 24** ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Christmas Eve Worship @ 10:30am

**Saturday, December 30** ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer @ 8:00am

**Sunday, December 31** ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am





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



**What did one cranberry say to another at Christmas?** 'Tis the season to be jelly!

**Did you hear about what happened to the man who stole the advent calendar?**

He got 25 days!

**What do you get when you cross a pig and Christmas tree lights?** A pig-lit

**Why did the Christmas tree go to the doctor?** It was looking a little green.

**Why wouldn't Ebenezer Scrooge eat at the pasta restaurant?**

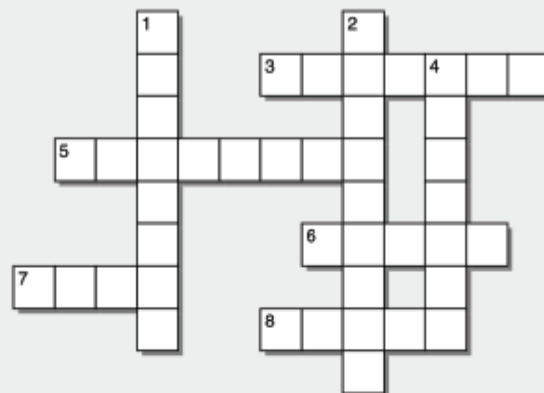
It cost a pretty penne!

**Why did Frosty's girlfriend break up with him?** He was a total flake!

**"Knock, knock!" Who's there?" "Anna." "Anna who?" "**

Anna partridge in a pear tree.

## ⚔ CrossWORD



### "Covenant With Noah"

Genesis 9

#### Across

- 3) God set this in the cloud.
- 5) Covenant was with God, man, every \_\_\_.
- 6) "But you shall not eat \_\_\_ with its life..."
- 7) The bow was a \_\_\_ of the covenant.
- 8) Never again would a \_\_\_ destroy earth."

#### Down

- 1) "Thus I establish My \_\_\_ with you;"
- 2) "Surely for you \_\_\_ I will demand a reckoning"
- 3) "So God \_\_\_ Noah and his sons.

United Methodist Men Minutes from the meeting on  
November 16, 2023

The meeting was conducted by President  
Bill Lalla. There were 8 members present:  
Darryl Deavers, Jarman Fretwell, Corey Johnson, Bill  
Lalla, Kenny Fretwell, Pastor Mike Reeves, Bruce  
Rogers and Jack Walker.



Devotions were provided by Cory Johnson.

The meal was prepared and served by the ladies from the Circle of Hope.

**PROGRAM:** There was no program.

**MINUTES:** The minutes for the last scheduled meeting on October 12, 2023 were presented by  
Bruce Rogers. There being no questions, the minutes were approved as submitted.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:** The Treasurer's Report was given by Kenny Fretwell. It included a monthly report  
for November 2023. It includes all expenses and revenue since our last meeting. A copy of his  
report is part of these minutes.

Checking \$ 8,684.29 Savings \$ 2,224.71 Total \$ 10,909.00

**OLD BUSINESS:** Bill Lalla advised the covered dish luncheon held on Sunday, November 12th was a  
success. The Dunns performed during the church service. After the service, everyone was invited  
to bring a covered dish and join together for good food and fellowship. UMM provided meat for the  
luncheon. We fed about 50 people.

Darryl Deavers and Bruce Rogers met with Steve Culls to discuss his need for trimming some trees.

The group discussed the work and decided it was something we want to do. A work day will be scheduled to  
do the work. Members agreed to work together to complete this project.

Jack Walker said the Boy Scouts of Troop 56 have gotten their stuff out of the basement and will no longer be  
meeting at the church. He suggests we plan a good cleanup for the basement area. He will coordinate with  
other UMM members to set up a cleanup and remove unwanted items.

**NEW BUSINESS:** The need for additional money in the Pastor's Discretionary Fund was discussed. A  
motion (Bill Lalla/Jack Walker) was made and approved to donate \$1,000 to the Pastor's  
Discretionary Fund. There is a bench in the rear of the Sanctuary that needs repair. UMM will work  
to get it repaired. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned after a prayer by  
Pastor Mike. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 18, 2024 at 6:30 pm, Jack  
Walker has devotions.

~ Respectfully prepared and submitted by Bruce Rogers, Secretary.

# The Square of Many Colors

by: Cynthia Sheets

I was handed a little colorful cloth square last week at church.

A prayer square, I thought. But, this one had a tiny surprise to be found in it - sewn into the cloth square was a tiny little cross.

And I thought, this is great. This physical item will help me stay connected and grounded in spirit. It was just what I needed on a morning that was less than stellar.

I later learned that the colorful square pattern was chosen just for me. The colorful little square was definitely a pattern that I would have chosen for myself.

I caressed the tiny cloth gift as the morning worship service moved on. Holding it in my hands as I made effort to take in the message of the sermon.

And I began to think about the time and kindness of thought that it took to craft this humble little expression of faith, appreciation and love. The time it may have taken to craft this item was probably small, but the thought behind it was immeasurable.

How beautiful a gesture it was for that young spirit to bring *Me* to the forefront of her mind and heart, and to take the time out of her life to use the gifts given to her by God, and present me with all of this on one unexpected - and up until then - one sour morning for me.



There was no way for her to know how cruddy my morning had been going, but she just looked at me with such bright-smiling eyes ... and I saw Jesus!

Such a wonderful blessing! Anytime you can see God in someone.

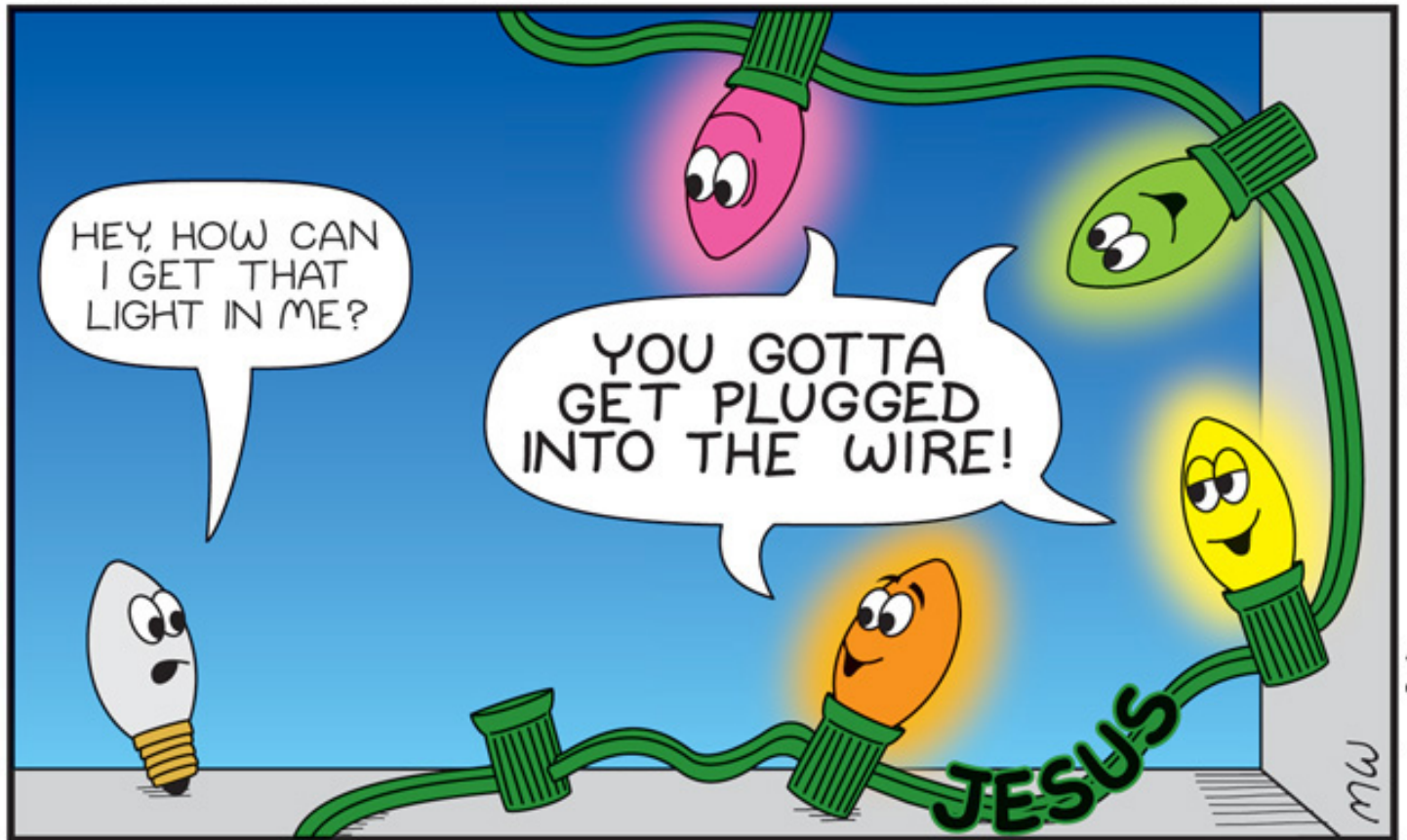
In a year that I have penned to be the worst of my life - which I do not say lightly - in the waning weeks of 2023 - this small, simple act of kindness, love and faith, was created and gifted to me - from a willing and enthusiastic young person with a spirit more fully faithful than I could be in this moment... as the past few years have weighed heavily on me.

That faithful act and that small colorful square has already brought me comfort, peace, and a renewed sense of hopefulness in the future of my personal faith journey and in the future of my church family. It has truly given me New Hope.



# CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



www.joyfultoons.com © 2008 Michael D. Waters

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." — JOHN 8:12 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](mailto:NewHopeUMC.Virginia@gmail.com)*

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