

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

## **The Hilltopper**



**June 2023**

### ***From Pastor Mike***

We are still working on getting everything in order before requesting a Church Conference. My position on disaffiliation is unchanged: the United Methodist Church is not perfect, but I believe it is the best place for me to live out my calling as a pastor. I also hope you feel that the UMC is the best church home for you to live out your own discipleship.

I have made that clear, but my opinion does not matter. If you are a Professing Member, you must do your due diligence as we approach a Church Conference vote. I will gladly meet privately with anyone or any group wanting to discuss disaffiliation. If you do not want to talk to me, talk to each other if you can do so with grace and humility.

Despite the uncertainty, New Hope UMC remains engaged in ministry.

In May, we supported the community with a spaghetti supper which raised over \$1,200. Eleven men gathered on a Thursday evening to do some landscaping. (Have you seen the memory garden!) The Youth have organized a trip to see "Moses" at Sight & Sound in Lancaster, PA on June 15. In July, we have a week-long Vacation Bible School planned. Ministry is taking place. Thank you!

However, the effect of disaffiliation discernment on our stewardship is concerning because giving is down significantly. Our attendance is slightly up from last year but giving is down. Some may be having their voices heard by withholding or cutting back on their tithes and offerings. Our voices are heard loudly through our checkbooks, but we are looking at some tough choices if our stewardship does not improve.

Our Finance Chair, Kevin Armstrong, addresses this very concern in this newsletter. Please take the time to read his article and pray for your response.

I will leave you with this: Assume the best of each other in all things. Let's face it, this is an uncomfortable place to be. We need to talk to one another without being judgmental or aggressive. We need to be civil with each other. Civility is the minimum standard, we need to love each other. In the end, how much love remains will go a long way in determining the future of New Hope regardless of a Church Conference vote.

Yours in Christ, *Pastor Mike*



## Summer Bible Study Begins Tuesday, June 20th The Big Picture: Seeing God's Dream for Your Life

We did not have a Lenten Bible study this year, so Pastor Mike is offering a 5-week in-person Bible study beginning on Tuesday, June 20th, at 6:00pm.

Here is some information about the book.

**The Big Picture: Seeing God's Dream for Your Life:** Life can often feel like a scattering of random events. The various choices, opportunities, or even pain we experience seem to have no real purpose or connection. But if we pay attention to God's work, our lives tell a different story.

Take a closer look at the life of Joseph to discover God's presence in moments of triumph and trauma to understand *The Big Picture: Seeing God's Dream for Your Life*. Learn how God weaves together events that seem random into a beautiful image of joy, survival, purpose, and meaning. Join authors Jevon and Nicole Caldwell-Gross for this five-week study and see God's dream for your life as you begin connecting the dots of God's grace, presence, and protection.

This five-week study will be offered each Tuesday at 6:00pm from June 20th until July 18th. The cost of the book is \$10. Contact Pastor Mike if you would like to register for this study and reserve a copy of the book.



# Vacation Bible School

July 24th-July 28th



The following are the minutes from the **MAY** 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 - May 25, 2023**

Present: Kevin Armstrong, Andy Breeding, Alicia Copeland, Robin Craun, Cindy Deavers, Wanda Harding, Beth Howdysshell, Linda Howdysshell, Corey Johnson, Bill Lalla, Kim Maugans, Pastor Mike, Cindy Sheets, Dallas VanLear, and Karen Whitmer.

The meeting was called to order by chairperson Dallas Van Lear. And Kim Maugans read a devotion from Matthew 7:12 and prayed.

**There was a correction to the April 2023 meeting minutes: Corey Johnson was voted in as the new Trustees Chairperson and Jack Walker is a new member of the Trustees Committee.**

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

- We have only taken in \$7,600 in tithes and donations so far this month. We need \$10,000 each month just to pay for our church staff salaries.
- Kevin recommended that we pay \$2,000 more on the active/retired clergy health apportionments.

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

- Not much more to add to what Kevin reported.
- We have taken in \$7,754 in donations so far for May.
- All monthly bills have been paid.
- There is a propane bill that just came in today that needs to be paid for \$826 for the parsonage that was delivered on May 16th. This bill will be paid next week.
- \$2,000 in payroll will be paid.

## **Finance Secretary:** *(Robin Craun reported)*

- Robin ordered some more of the giving envelopes last week.

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

- Still working on the propane situation. We will get new tanks. So if anyone knows of someone selling 500 gallon steel bottom propane tanks, please let Corey or one of the other trustees know. It will be \$3,600 if we purchase new tanks from the propane company. Right now we are working with a division of Southern States. If we get our own tanks, then we can go with any propane company at any time.
- Corey reported that the stairs to the playground have been fixed.
- Bill Lalla is now the new secretary/treasurer.

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

- Mike nominated Cindy Deavers to be our Lay Leader through the end of 2023. Dallas seconded it and the motion was passed by all.
- Mike will be working to get a new financial secretary to replace Robin as soon as possible, as this is a top priority for him.
- We will also need a Hospitality Chairperson and a Worship Chairperson. The Worship Team will start meeting again in June.
- Mike will offer a 5-week Summer Bible Study beginning on Tuesday evenings at 6:00pm. The bible study will be on the book called: "The Big Picture" starting June 20th.
- Mike is still working on a presentation for his trip to Cuba.

## **Spiritual Nurture:** *(report from Samantha Brensinger)*

- We will be honoring Graduates on June 1st for both High School and College. Please forward pictures and graduates name and information to Sam. We will have graduation gifts, so if the graduates can attend, please let Sam know so we can have them come forward and receive their gift, if not make sure to get the gift from Sam to forward on.
- Our Sight and Sound trip is fast approaching, on June 15th . We will have a quick breakfast at 9am for those going on the trip and we will leave the church on the bus at 10am. We will be seeing Moses and the show starts at 3pm. We should have time before and after the show to visit the gift shop before loading the bus and head home. Adult tickets and transportation costs are \$143. Transportation cost for children is \$73. Youth are paid for by the New Hope UMC Youth group.



- Vacation Bible School dates have been set for Monday, July 24th – Friday, 28th with the celebration picnic on Sunday, July 30th after service. At the picnic we will hand out the school supplies as we have done in the past. The theme is Food Truck Party! We will serve dinner at 5:30pm for kids and volunteers and VBS will run from 6-8:30pm. We are looking to have food trucks there for dinner and welcome the community to come and eat from the food trucks, they will pay for their meals on the days we have them there. We do need the church's help, the Youth have chosen to have this event as one of their church/community services and will be trying to pay for decorations, supplies, and food. They need volunteers and donations to help them make this a success. They have already purchased postcards, small posters, and banners to be placed and handed out throughout the community, please take a poster or cards to hang or hand out/mail. We are hoping to have the banners put up this weekend at the end of Round Hill School Road and down by New Hope Grocery. Any help getting the word out so we can grow our VBS program would be much appreciated.

### **United Methodist Men:** *(Bill Lalla reported)*

- Last Thursday the UMM had a work-night with 11 people coming out to help out. They mulched, trimmed and worked on the memorial garden. And pizza was provided by Bruce Rogers. They will probably have one more work-night this summer.
- The UMM raised \$1,200 during the Spaghetti Supper for the New Hope Fire Department, the New Hope Ruritans and the New Hope Youth Athletic League. The ladies at the New Hope Grocery donated all of the spaghetti sauce for the fundraiser. The leftovers were given to the Mission in Staunton.

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

- There will be no circle meetings in the summer.

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

- Alicia Copeland requested a second reduction in her salary, and that request was approved as of May 1st.
- The Parish Evaluation will come due soon, so the Staff/Parish Committee will have a meeting in the next few weeks.
- On July 1st the Parsonage review is due and that will be taken care of before the deadline.

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

- Karen reported that she has gotten feedback for about 12 names on the “no address list” published in last month’s Hilltopper. So the membership list is still a work in progress.
- Pastor Mike stated that the list that we now have will be fine, we will just fine-tune as we go along.

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

- Working on writing up directions for how to set up and run the a/v room from start to finish, so that we can post them and keep the instructions in the a/v room for anyone to use.

## **Unfinished Business / Disaffiliation Business:**

- Dallas contacted a number of people to be the new church liaison between New Hope Church and the District Superintendent, since no one volunteered for this role, Dallas will be our new liaison, with the help of a few other people.
- This is a work in progress. We are still working on getting the membership address list up to date and the trustees information. All of that information should be gathered in the next month.
- As of today, the attorney David Green and one other have been retained, but this has not cost anything to the church as of yet.

Dallas thanked us all for serving the church - the congregation appreciates it. Special thanks to those stepping up into new positions. Pastor Mike prayed and the meeting ended at 7:08pm.

Respectfully submitted by:  
Cynthia Sheets  
Recording Secretary

*The next church council meeting will be Thursday, June 22, 2023*



# FINANCE COMMITTEE

*~ From the Finance Chair ~*

The Finance chairman rose to address the church and said,  
I have good news and bad news.

The good news is that we have enough money to pay  
all our bills till the end of the year! Everyone cheered!

Then he said, the bad news is the money is still in your pockets!

This is an old finance committee joke, and I don't like to make light of a situation.

I realize that many in the church are on fixed incomes and the cost of goods  
and services have been steadily increasing over the past several years.

It is my duty as Finance chair to report that our giving continues to decline.  
At the end of last year, I reported that we did not pay our apportionments  
in full for the first time in a non-pandemic year. We are now at a level  
where we cannot pay our apportionments, and we are in danger  
of not being able to pay our church support staff.

It is not my place to be twisting arms, but to inform you of our current situation.

Thank you.

Kevin Armstrong, Finance Chair

  
2023  
class of  
Congratulations Graduates!



**Ethan Corbett**

Graduating from Valley Vocational Technical Center and Staunton High School

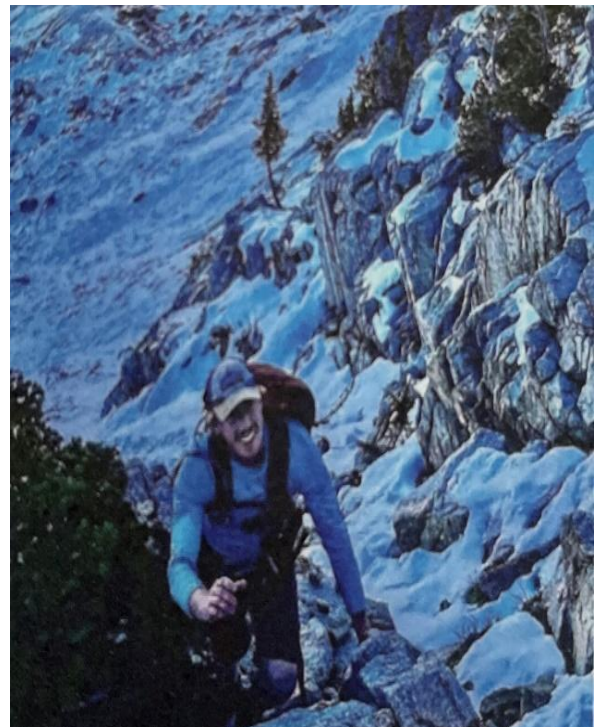
Working with his father in their carpentry business

Parents: Mike and Denise Corbett  
Grandparents: Dale and Janice Rankin

**Braden Herman**

Master's Degree of Science Natural Resources Fisheries at California State Polytechnical University Humboldt, Arcata, California

Parents: Lester and Amy Herman



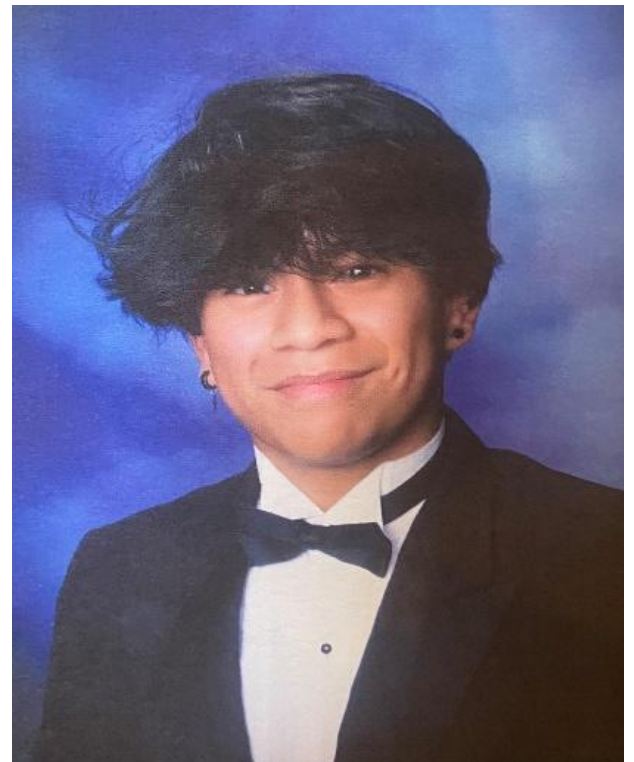




## **Krista Hinebaugh**

Graduating from Glen Allen High School  
Will be attending Averett University

Parents: Randall and Kim Hinebaugh  
Grandparents: Nadine Hinebaugh and  
the late Larry Hinebaugh



## **Santiago Wesley Lank**

Graduating from West Springfield High School  
on June 6th  
Will be going into the workforce.

Parents: Tim and Suzanne Lank  
Grandparents: Jack and Joetta Walker



## **Brad Maller**

Graduating from Internal Medicine at VCU,  
and continuing for 3 years in Oncology at VCU

Parents: Mr. and Mrs. Glenn Maller  
Fiance of Courtney Stout



## Hannah Massie

Graduating from Blacksburg High School  
Planning to attend New River Community College

Parents: Jason Massie  
Grandparents: Andy and Loretta Dameron

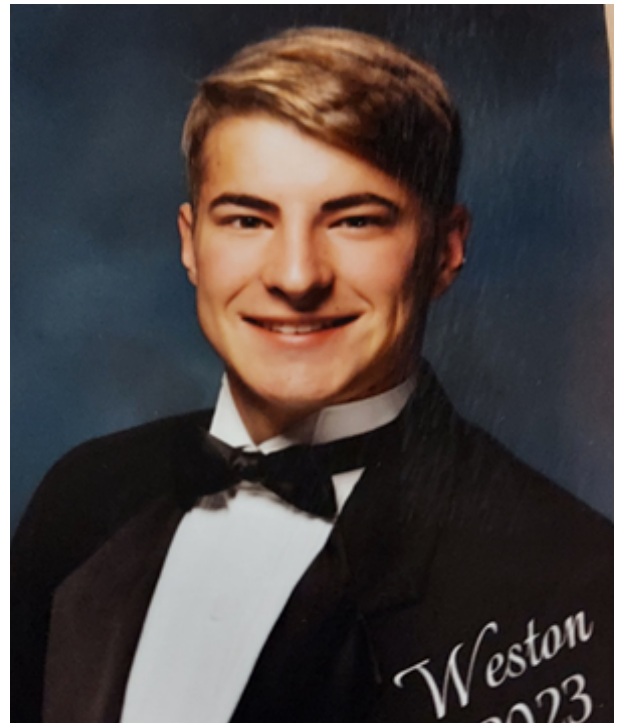


## Kaylee McLaren

Graduating from JMU with a B.S.  
in Sport and Recreation Management,  
and with a minor in General Business

Planning to intern at Massanutten Resort

Parents: Kevin and Wendy McLaren



## Weston Powell

Graduating from Fort Defiance High School,  
Will be attending Roanoke College

Parents: Broc and Christy Powell  
Grandparents: Rob and Judy Riner



## Naomi Ritchie

Graduating from Mary Baldwin University  
with a degree in Art  
Will be an Art Teacher at Elkton Middle School

Parents: Richard and Natasha Ritchie  
Grandparents: Andy and Loretta Dameron

## Ethan Walker

Graduating from Sidwell Friends School in  
Washington, D.C.  
Will attend Colby College in Maine

Parents: Jeff and Donna Walker  
Grandparents: Jack and Joetta Walker



*“For I know the plans I have for you,  
declares the LORD,  
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,  
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*

(Jeremiah 29:11)



Thanks to Jackie 01-26-2006

I TOLD YOU THIS WAS NOT A GREAT SPOT FOR GRADUATION

## Funnies

What happened when the girl didn't pass her final exam for her cosmetology degree?

~ She had to sign up for *makeup* classes!

Why did Mary want to work at a Kentucky Fried Chicken Restaurant even though she'd graduated as the class valedictorian?

~ It had been on her *bucket* list for a long time!

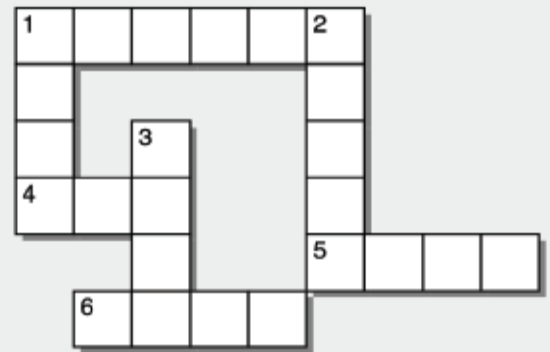
Why was a married man not allowed to complete his undergraduate degree?

~ Because he wasn't a *bachelor*!

Why do most M&Ms want to go to college?

~ They want to turn into *Smarties*!

## ⚔ CrossWORD



## "The Serpent Tempts"

Genesis 3

### Across

- 1) "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the \_\_\_?'"
- 4) The serpent told Eve she wouldn't \_\_\_.
- 5) What the serpent would eat after God's punishment.
- 6) Second-hand eater.

### Down

- 1) Eve saw that the tree was \_\_\_ for food.
- 2) Without clothing.
- 3) He shall bruise your \_\_\_.





# **Your United Methodist Church In Mission**

With over 12 million members, the UMC has the reach, both with people and resources, to accomplish ministry on a Global as well as local scale. Presently, the UMC has ongoing short and long term mission projects in 115 countries. As with all mission projects, especially in foreign countries, emphasis is placed on educating, equipping, and training locals and other faith based partners to carry on long after the mission teams return home. This allows the locals to take ownership and sustain themselves.

In the recent 7.8 magnitude earthquake in Turkey and Syria, tens of thousands were killed and millions were left homeless in sub-freezing weather. The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) were among the first on the scene distributing food, blankets, medicine, and emergency shelter. Few agencies have the resources, willingness, and faith, to spread the love of Christ in so many ways.



Locally, we recently opened Mission Central in Harrisonburg; this is a facility that gives out thousands of pieces of clothing, as well as diapers, to families in need every year, many of them newly arrived refugees. Equipment for caring is another of our projects that distributes free medical equipment such as walkers, bath seats, wheelchairs, and hospital beds to those without insurance coverage. This outreach of our district is now housed in new and bigger quarters at Mt. Tabor UMC in Lacey Springs.

In addition, our district owns and operates Camp Overlook that provides people of all ages an opportunity to encounter God in renewing, meaningful ways to grow in community as a body of believers. Camp Overlook also sponsors the 'Walk to Emmaus', a UMC three-day retreat of spiritual renewal. Just some of the outreach that occurs on a daily, weekly, and monthly basis, year after year

**Your United Methodist Church At Work**

~ Bill Lalla

# Collections for June

*We need your help!-*



**WHAT:** Donations of **Rice** and **Toothbrushes**

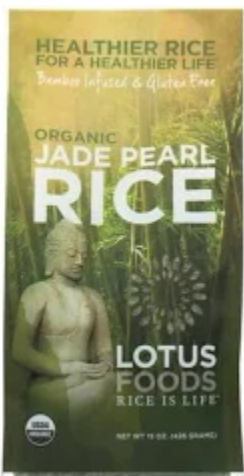
**WHEN:** The entire month of June

**WHERE:** Place donations in the marked bins in the Narthex.

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



**WHY:** To help others in need in New Hope, and the surrounding areas.



**QUESTIONS:** Contact Cheryl and Nathan Kutz.

(202) 495-1346



[RealLifeHeavenlyHands@gmail.com](mailto:RealLifeHeavenlyHands@gmail.com)

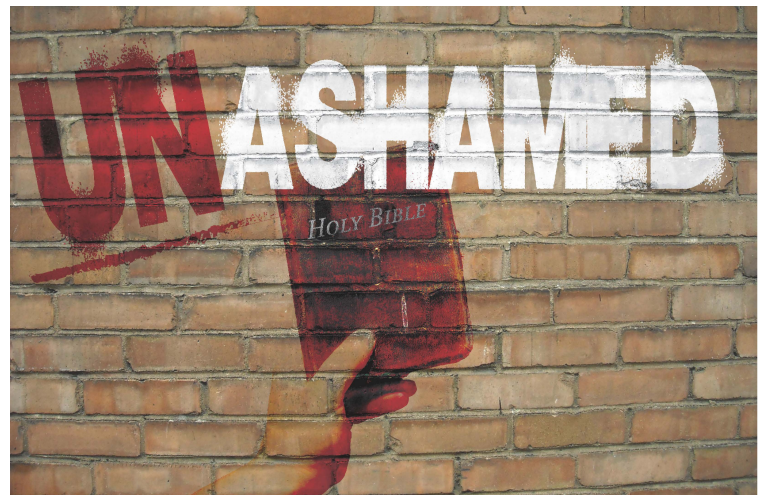


# Ashamed or Unashamed

“And when he had called the people unto him with his disciples also, he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.” (Mark 8:34-38 KJV)

I'm going to come out of the gate fast on this one. My goal for me as I write this, for you as you read it is to be uncomfortable. Whether you were co workers of mine, worship God in the same church as me, or a family member, this passage of scripture applies to all of us.

2 1/2 years ago when I would say my true spiritual life in Christ began this is one of the passages that really pricked my conscience. I will never forget that time in my life. I would say that is when the words of Jesus Christ truly changed me. Are you changed? Or are you the same with a nice clean label that says you're changed?



I want to ask all of you these questions based on what we read out of the passage above. First, are you following after Jesus? Second, have you denied yourself and are you carrying your cross? Do you care about things in this life, that at the end of the day truly don't matter. I'm going to say we because I'm guilty of this also. We need to have a priority check. Number one like verse 36 says what good is it if you gain this whole world but you lose your soul? Also, what have you put in place of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Finally, are you ashamed of the tough words of Jesus Christ?

I'm not saying whatsoever that they are easy to read. That is what made them so life-changing to me. They offended me, they made me uncomfortable. They didn't really make me angry, but there were times where I definitely did not like them. Yet no matter how they came across the truth in the words of Jesus Christ was undeniable. There were so many things about life that made sense and I knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he was the way the truth and the life.

I am not ashamed of him. I'm not ashamed of his words. I'm not ashamed of the entirety of scripture. It has all been given to us by the Holy Spirit. Jesus said: "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak."  
(John 12:47-50 KJV)

We are at a critical point in our time, culture, and lives. There are very few standards, anchor points, hardly any absolutes. We are increasingly becoming a people who build everything on sand. Please take a step back from that and picture this, our children and their children, instead of having something to carry on, will live the same exact way. And when the Lord returns what will he find? A people and church who paid every price and held their ground and carried their cross? Or a church and people who committed spiritual adultery, carried along idols of false belief and "clean" sins. What living sacrifice (your daily life) will you give to our blessed Lord?

There is a hymn that I have not forgotten ever since I heard the lyrics recited. I want to finish with a few stanzas from it.

*"When this bright world would tempt me sore, When Satan would a victory score;  
When self would seek to have its way, Then help me Lord with joy to say;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Give me Father, a purpose deep, In joy or sorrow Thy word to keep;  
Faithful and true what e'er the strife, Pleasing Thee in my daily life;  
Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.*

*Oh let my love with fervor burn, And from the world now let me turn;  
Living for Thee, and Thee alone, Bringing Thee pleasure on Thy throne;  
Only one life, "twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last."*

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

# NEED A HAND?

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!"

- 1 CORINTHIANS 12:21 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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