

New Hope United Methodist Church's Monthly Newsletter

The Hilltopper

January 2026

Dear New Hope UMC Family,

As we step into a new year, we do so with a mix of emotions and steadfast faith. Losing another minister—our fourth in two years—is not something we ever expected. It's understandable that many of us feel weary, disappointed, or uncertain. Yet even in this season, we have every reason to trust that God is still at work in, and through our church.

Throughout Scripture, God often led His people forward not by certainty, but by trust. We can take comfort knowing that the same God who has guided us this far - in our 176 years - will continue to lead us with love, provision, and grace.

As our leadership changes, God has not and will not change. He has not left us. His purpose for our church has not faded. Seasons like this can actually deepen our roots, draw us closer together, and open doors for new vision, healing, and growth. God often does some of His most beautiful work in seasons that feel uncertain, and we can trust that He is shaping something meaningful for our future.

One thing these past years have shown is that our church is resilient. We have worshiped faithfully, prayed for one another, cared for our congregation, and continued serving our community throughout every transition. You—our church family—are the proof that the church is alive, steadfast, and grounded in Christ.

We are reminded that our church has never been about a single person—it has always been about the body of Christ working together, united in love and purpose. Our strength has never rested in the pulpit alone, but in the hearts, hands, and spirit of every member who serves, worships, and believes with us together. We are blessed with gifted leaders, faithful volunteers, prayer warriors, encouragers, and servants of Christ who reflect the spirit of Jesus so beautifully everyday. With everyone doing their part, our church will not simply “get by”—we will grow, thrive, and discover new ways to shine God’s light.

In the future, there will be chances for new voices to rise, new ministries to bloom, and new expressions of faith to take shape. We will continue to worship, to pray, to serve our community, and to love one another deeply. We will celebrate God’s goodness, support one another through challenges, and trust that every step forward is guided by His hand.

And as we move forward - not with fear and uncertainty, but with expectation and peace. Let us choose unity over discouragement, faith over fear, and hope over frustration. Let's continue praying for God's guidance, supporting one another, showing up for worship, and staying committed to the mission He has given us. Together, with grace, patience, and courage, we will step into our future knowing that God still has wonderful plans for the future of our church. God is not finished with us yet—in many ways, a beautiful new chapter is just beginning.

May we walk forward together with faith, courage, and joy; knowing that God will do immeasurably more than we can even ask for or imagine.

Thank you for your faithfulness, your love, and your perseverance.

May this new year be a season of new beginnings filled with peace, joy, love and new hope!

With love and gratitude,

Becky Breeding, Cindy Deavers, Susan Mehler, Cindy Sheets, Sandy Wyrick

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY



We will have our Souper Bowl

Sunday celebration on

Sunday, January 25, 2026

after worship service.

All donations to this event will be

given to the Verona Food Pantry.



Church Council Meeting

The following are the minutes from the [December 2025](#) 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!

Administrative Council Meeting Minutes - December 11, 2025

Those in attendance: Becky & Mike Breeding, Alicia Copeland, Cindy Deavers, Wanda Harding, Linda Howdyshell, Bill & Judy Lalla, Corey Johnson, Pastor Ashley Oliver-Thomas, Bruce Rogers and Cindy Sheets

Becky Breeding called the meeting to order; and read devotions from the Upper Room

The minutes from the October 2025 meeting were accepted and passed by all.

Pastor's Report: (Pastor Ashley reported)

- Pastor Ashley informed us that she would be leaving our church on December 31st, 2025. She will be taking a position as a VCU chaplain.
- We are in contact with the District Superintendent to see what our options are for our immediate future. We may have to have guest ministers or laity deliver the message for a while.

Nominations: (Pastor Ashley reported)

- Bruce Rogers is stepping down as Finance Chair. Corey Johnson will be filling that position.
- Mike Breeding will be the new Chair of the Trustees.
- There was a motion made to accept these people into their new roles, Bill seconded and it was passed by all.

Finance: *(Bruce Rogers reported)*

- To stay on our current budget, we are in need of \$3,037 each week. We have been receiving \$2,144 on average each week.
- Our 2026 budget is about \$50,000 less than our 2025 budget, so at our current amount of giving that we are receiving, we should be okay with our 2026 budget, if giving continues at the current pace.

Treasurer: *(Cindy Deavers reported)*

- The bill for the new water heaters has been paid. The labor to install and remove them was \$2,279. The water heaters themselves were \$1,091.71 with Corey's veteran's discount. We received \$700 from the United Methodist Men and another \$700 from the Community Meal donations.
- All bills are current. Currently we have \$26,170.20 in the General Fund.
- Cindy recommended that we paid \$1,288 in District Apportionments.
- We have paid \$500 to the Verona Food Pantry

United Methodist Men: *(Bill Lalla reported)*

- The Work project at the Cull residence was very successful, once again the family made a generous donation.
- The UMM has agreed to make a \$700 donation towards the hot water heater
- Due to the impending holidays our December meeting was cancelled.
- Officers were elected for the calendar year 2026. The slate remains the same as last year; President-Bill Lalla, Vice-President Corey Johnson, Secretary- Bruce Rogers, Treasurer-Kenny Fretwell.
- Our next meeting is scheduled for January 15th.

Membership: *(report from Karen Whitmer)*

MEMBERSHIP REPORT 2025:

- Deaths: Susan Baldwin, Kevin Armstrong, Margie Katherine Selman
- New Members: Kelcie Quick and Hailey Johnson

Communications / Technology: *(Cindy Sheets reported)*

- We have set up a Give Butter donation page. We want to test it and make sure that it does what we want it to before we start advertising it.
- There is a new router in the church office, but we are still having issues with the church computer having internet connections.
- We are going to contact New Hope Telephone to see if they have better options for us other than what Comcast does for our internet needs.
- We are also having issues with our live-stream. We are going to ask some of the people in the congregation who may be able to help us, if not we will contact John's Computer Services to see if they can help us with our live-streaming software.

Parent's Night Out: *(Alicia Copeland reported)*

- We had 10 kids. Everyone had a fun time. They made sugar cookies, decorated the Christmas Tree, played games, had crafts and good fellowship.

New Business:

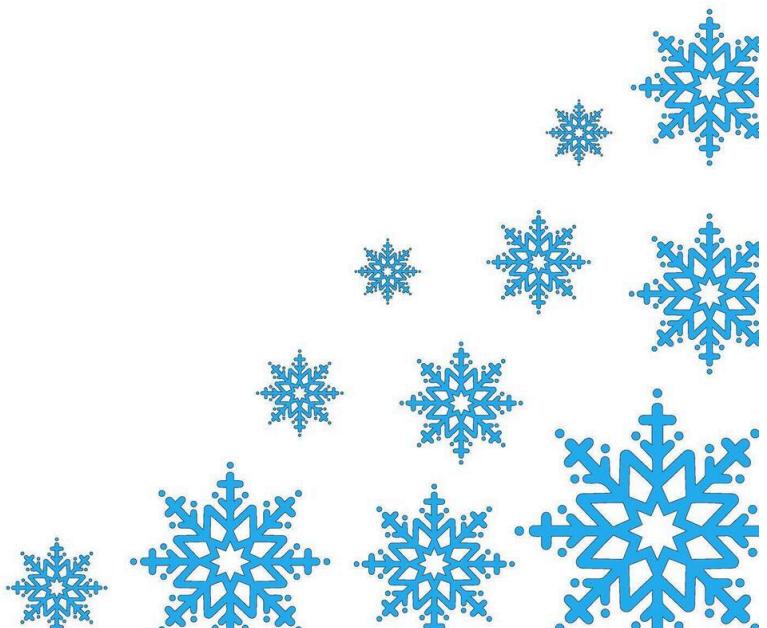
- We will be doing the Lenton Mission Project again this year supporting Comfort Care.
- We will need volunteers to help with visiting shut-ins and offering communion to them.

Becky closed the meeting and prayed.

The meeting ended at 7:37pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Cynthia Sheets,
Recording Secretary





Request for January



Mercy House is one of the few shelters in the valley that will take in families with children, some have been found sleeping in tents and in abandoned cars.

Mercy House is a short term solution for getting a family reoriented, finding them a job, and returning them to independence within a few months.

Thanks to generous donations: large amounts of ground beef, hot dogs, and even salad ingredients have been donated, but there has been no way to secure condiments.

So, we are asking for the following donations through the month of January:

Ketchup, Mustard, Mayonnaise, Relish and Salad Dressing

Thanks and God Bless ~ Bill & Judy



Upcoming Activities, Events and Meetings at New Hope UMC

Thursday, January 1st ~ Happy New Year!

Saturday, January 3rd ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

Sunday, January 4th ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship & Holy Communion @ 10:30am

Monday, January 5th ~ Circle of Hope and Love @ 6:30pm

Saturday, January 10th ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

Sunday, January 11th ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Thursday, January 15th ~ United Methodist Men @ 6:30pm

Saturday, January 17th ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

Sunday, January 18th ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Saturday, January 24th ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

Sunday, January 25th ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

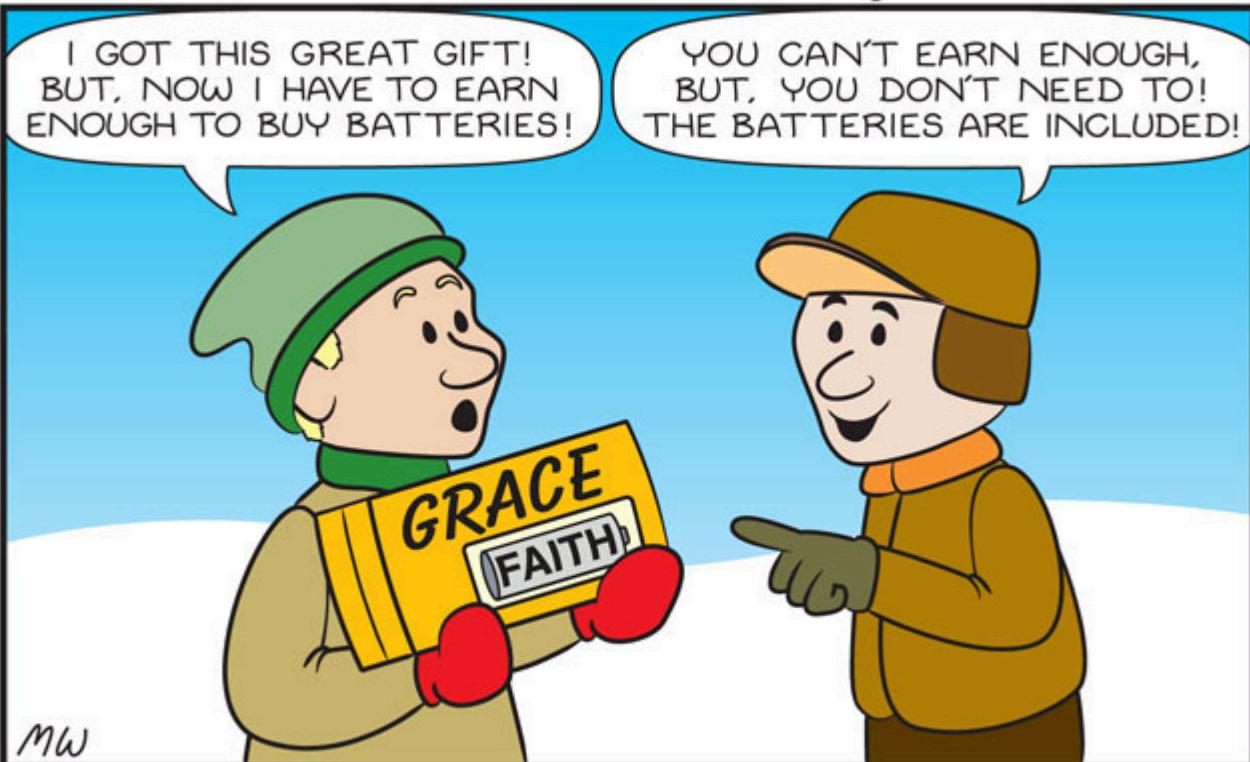
~ Souper Bowl of Caring Luncheon - after worship

Thursday, January 29th ~ Church Council Meeting @ 6:30pm

Saturday, January 31st ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

BATTERIES INCLUDED

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast.

— EPHESIANS 2:8–9 NIV

*If you would like to add an article or announcement to the *Hilltopper*,
please contact us at: NewHopeUMC.Virginia@gmail.com*

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