

New Hope United Methodist Church's Monthly Newsletter

The Hilltopper

October 2025



Dear New Hope UMC Friends,

I am so grateful to be your pastor. It has been a joy getting to know each of you already and I look forward to the experiences and bonds we will share in the weeks and months ahead. I don't like to ask people to do something I'm not willing to do myself: since I'm asking you all to invite me into your lives and get to know you, it's only fair I share a little bit about me. Next time you see me, I invite you to share some of your own answers to these questions.

~ Pastor Ashley

Get to know Pastor Ashley

Favorite ice cream flavor? *~ Cookies and Cream. And I prefer milkshakes over soft-serve ice cream!*

Favorite sour candy? *~ Sour Patch Kids.*

Favorite holiday? *~ Christmas!!*

What is your biggest fear? *~ Losing someone I love. Also, spiders.*

What is your dream travel destination? *~ Inside the U.S, the Redwood Forest. Outside the U.S, I'd love to walk the Great Wall of China.*

What is the most useful thing you own? *~ Would I even be a borderline millennial/Gen Z if I didn't say my iPhone?*

Favorite book/movie genre? *~ Thriller for both!*

Are you an early bird or a night owl? *~ Early bird. I have a strict 9:00 p.m. bedtime.*

Favorite season? *~ Fall.*

Favorite food? *~ Orange chicken.*

What is your favorite thing about your career? *~ Being present with people who are suffering is the greatest honor of my life. So is getting to preach about Jesus.*

COMMUNITY DINNER



*Our next Community Dinner
will be Wednesday, October 8th,
starting at 5:30pm.*

*Please invite your neighbors and
friends and come and enjoy a
hearty meal and good fellowship!*



The following are the minutes from the **September 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 - September 25, 2025

Those in attendance: Becky Breeding, Alicia Copeland, Wanda Harding, Linda Howdysshell, Beth Howdysshell, Bill Lalla, Corey Johnson, Susan Mehler, Pastor Ashley Oliver-Thomas, Bruce Rogers, Cindy Sheets, Karen Whitmer and Sandy Wyrick.

Becky Breeding called the meeting to order. Sandy Wyrick read a devotion on: 'Construction Season' focusing on James 1:2-4 and Romans 5: 3-4

The minutes from the August 2025 meeting were reviewed. A correction was made to the Events section: It should have read that there will be a Church Conference, not a District Conference at Dayton UMC. Sandy made a motion to accept the minutes with the correction. The corrections were accepted and the minutes to the August meeting were approved with the corrections.

Treasurer: *(report from Cindy Deavers)*

- All bills have been paid to date, including the Brotherhood Mutual quarterly payment of \$1,904.75.
- Cindy Deavers has paid the August Apportionments and will pay the September apportionments by the end of the month.
- Pastor Jim Harris has been paid for his last two weeks, in the amount of \$769.23 for part-time salary.
- Pastor Ashley has indicated that she wants \$500 expense reimbursement, so Cindy Deavers made that adjustment.
- All giving through Sunday, September 14th has been recorded.

Finance: *(Bruce Rogers reported)*

- For our 2026 budget, we are at about \$50,000 less than in 2025. Most of that has to do from the difference between the pastor's salary and apportionments.
- Therefore, in 2025, we need to average \$3,037 in giving received each week. In 2026 we will need to average \$2.090 each week.
- Bruce proposed that we accept the budget as presented, Sandy seconded it and it was passed by all.
- Corey thanked Bruce for all of his work with the budget and finances.

Trustees: *(Corey Johnson reported)*

- The parsonage has been cleaned and completed.
- There is a broken window in one of the downstairs classrooms. The same company that installed the Sanctuary windows has been contacted for repair.
- AVUA has been contacted regarding fixing the Sanctuary monitor on the left side, and also to take a look at the audio in the nursery.
- The Trustee's charge report has been submitted.
- We will look into getting a new dehumidifier for downstairs next year.
- The children's swingset needs some work. We will purchase some Deck-over to paint it - and if someone wants to do the painting, that would be appreciated.

Lay Leader: *(Susan Mehler reported)*

- At our last Coffee SHOP, we had a really good turn out.
- We are excited about the meet and greet time with our new Pastor Ashley.
- The last Circle meeting at Phyllis Jarvis' house was very nice and she was happy to have the meeting there.

United Methodist Men: *(Bill Lalla reported)*

- The men will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, and drinks for the October 8th community meal.
- There are several outdoor chores that need to be finished before winter sets in: Pruning/trimming shrubs, Replenishing mulch, Picking up leaves, gravel, branches and other debris, Reseeding the two areas where the propane tanks were removed, Refurbishing the playground - possibly at a later date.
- We will host a churchwide project on Saturday, October 4th
- The UMM will have a fundraising project on Saturday, November 1st at the Culls residence.

United Methodist Sisters: *(Wanda Harding reported)*

- The Circle of Hope and Love will meet on Monday, October 6th at 6:30pm
- Sisters of Faith will meet on Monday, October 6th at 1:30pm
- The Circle of Hope and LOve will serve a meal to the UM Men on October 16th at 6:00pm

Membership: *(Karen Whitmer reported)*

- The Pastor's Statistics Report for Charge Conference has been filled out and submitted. It includes membership changes since the last Charge Conference.

Communications: *(Cindy Sheets reported)*

- We are looking into having another option to take donations or tithing. We have decided to look into the donation platform called: Give Butter. They have a free option. It would allow us to accept donations from people either through an online link, texting or by using a QR Code. The donations could be a one-time donation or the donor could set up weekly recurring donations. This would also be helpful for us when we are fundraising, such as with the Peanut Butter Easter Egg Fundraiser, and such. For now, we will start with Give Butter and see if they meet our goals and expectations.

Pastor's Report: *(Pastor Ashley reported)*

- On Friday, October 3rd from 10am-11:30am, Pastor Ashley will have 'Coffee Time' at the Starbucks in Verona. It is an informal time to gather and talk about whatever.
- Pastor Ashley was interested in learning who leads our Sunday School classes and who leads our Bible studies. Also that we have in the past had specific bible studies for Advent and Lent.
- Pastor Ashley was informed about our Community Thanksgiving Service. This year it will be on Sunday, November 23rd at 7pm at Mt. Horeb Church.
- We may talk about partnering with other churches for potential youth activities.

Events:

September:

- We will have another Coffee SHOP, along with a meet and greet with Pastor Ashley on Sunday, September 28th starting at: 9:30am.

October:

- Our next Community Dinner will be on Wednesday, October 8th starting at 5:30pm. We have a sign-up in the Narthex for volunteers. The UM Men will handle the meat and drinks. And food/supply donations that you may have will need to be to the church by Sunday, October 5th.

November:

- On Saturday, November 8th, we will have a Fellowship Meal, for the church, starting at: 5:30pm. We will be having oysters, 2 sides and a drink. Reservations will be required and a price will be given at a later date.
- On Sunday, November 9th, we will have a Church Conference at 3pm at Dayton UMC.

December:

- In December we will have another Parent's Day Out. It's something that we want to try to do on a quarterly basis. It will be on Saturday, December 6th from 10am-1pm. There will be no meal for parents, only lunch for the kids. We will need volunteers to help us. It will have a Christmas theme. It will be hosted in the social hall. There will be a sign-up to register the kids.
- There will be a Church-wide Christmas Luncheon on Sunday, December 14th. This will be a covered-dish luncheon after worship service.
- During Advent this year, we will be gathering school supplies for the second semester.
- On Friday, December 5th, the New Hope Christmas Parade will take place.

New Business:

- **Church Discretionary Account:** Bill Lalla made a motion to remove Pastor Micheal Reaves and Jennifer Strothers from the church's Dupont Community Credit Union Bank Account, and to add Pastor Ashley Oliver-Thomas and Susan Mehler to the account. Sandy Wyrick seconded the motion, a vote was taken and the motion was agreed to and passed by all members present.

Becky closed the meeting. Pastor Ashley prayed.

The meeting ended at 7:47pm

Respectfully submitted by:

Cynthia Sheets,
Recording Secretary





Upcoming Activities, Events and Meetings at New Hope UMC

Wednesday, October 1st ~ Bible Study @ 6:30pm

Saturday, October 4th ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am
~ Church Work Day starting at 9am

Sunday, October 5th ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am
~ Sunday Morning Worship and Holy Communion @ 10:30am

Tuesday, October 6th ~ Sisters of Faith @ 1:30pm
~ Circle of Hope & Love @ 6:30pm

Wednesday, October 8th ~ Community Meal @ 5:30pm

Saturday, October 11th ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

Sunday, October 12th ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am
~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Wednesday, October 15th ~ Bible Study @ 6:30pm

Thursday, October 16th ~ United Methodist Men @ 6:00pm

Saturday, October 18th ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

Sunday, October 19th ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am
~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

Thursday, October 23rd ~ Church Council Meeting @ 6:30pm

Saturday, October 25th ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

Sunday, October 26th ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am
~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

'Ships' Needed for Successful Church Sailing

When the people of Judah returned from Babylonian captivity, they began the work of the rebuilding of the temple. But soon afterward, the people became lazy and self-centered and stopped working altogether. The prophet Haggai wrote his little book to motivate the people to resume the project.

Since the church is the temple of God today (1 Cor. 3:16-17), we would do well to note the factors that were needed in Haggai's day for making the temple as God desired. Utilizing these will lead to great church success today, as well. From Haggai chapter 1, we can see the three "ships" they needed and we still need today:

FellowShip (v.1-11). The people had disassociated themselves from the collective and were living their own selfish, materialistic lives. They needed to get back together. Let us remember that fellowship in the church is a vital element for encouragement and success (Heb. 10:24-25). Other "ships" under this category would be citizenship (Eph. 2:19) and worship (Phil. 3:3).



LeaderShip (v.12-14a). Because Zerabbuel, Joshua, and Haggai stepped up and took charge, they were able to lead the people forward. A part of their leadership involved being obedient to God's plan. No less is needed today in the spiritual leadership of the church – leading through the example of following God (1 Tim. 3:1-16), and the church following them (Heb. 13:17). This kind of leadership leads to harmony and success. Other "ships" under this category would be membership (Eph. 5:30) and discipleship (Acts 14:21-22).

PartnerShip (v.14-15). The people then did work together, contributing both resources and talents (see also Haggai 2:1-9). Because they did this, God promised blessings (Haggai 2:19). It is the same in the church today – working together and every member doing their part for productivity and success (Eph. 4:11-16). Other "ships" under this category would be stewardship (1 Pet. 4:10) and workmanship (Heb. 6:10).

Let us indeed "consider our ways" (Haggai 1:5, 7; 2:15, 18; cf. 2 Cor. 13:5) and do our part in these areas, knowing they will bring about "smooth sailing" for the Lord's church.

STEAMBOAT

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.

– 1 CORINTHIANS 15:58 NIV

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