

# **The Hilltopper**

# **December 2025**



New Hope Church family,

Happy December, and happy Advent.

As we journey through this Advent season together, I invite you to ask yourselves:

What am I anticipating? What am I preparing room for in my life? What am I expecting?

Someone recently reminded me that sometimes the best things are the ones we do not expect.

How does that land with you? Can you think of something that has happened in your life that you didn't expect, but ended up being grateful for?

In the case of Advent, we know we are preparing and expecting the arrival of Jesus, the Messiah.

What a joy. Throughout this season, I invite you to think about the expectations you have.

Maybe they are expectations for your work, your family, your community, your church.

Whatever those expectations may be, notice them, and even challenge them:

What would happen if you were more open to what or who you do not necessarily expect?

Feel free to share with one another and with me as you ask yourselves these questions!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Ashley



New Hope will have its  
Christmas Parade on  
Friday, December 12th.  
Everyone is invited to join  
us to walk in the parade  
or ride the float!



Plan now to join us  
for our Christmas  
Eve Service  
starting at 7:00pm



# Church Covered Dish Luncheon

# CHRISTMAS



Please plan now  
to join us on  
Sunday, December 14th,  
for our Church Christmas  
Luncheon. Everyone is  
invited to join in the food,  
fellowship and  
Christmas Festivities!

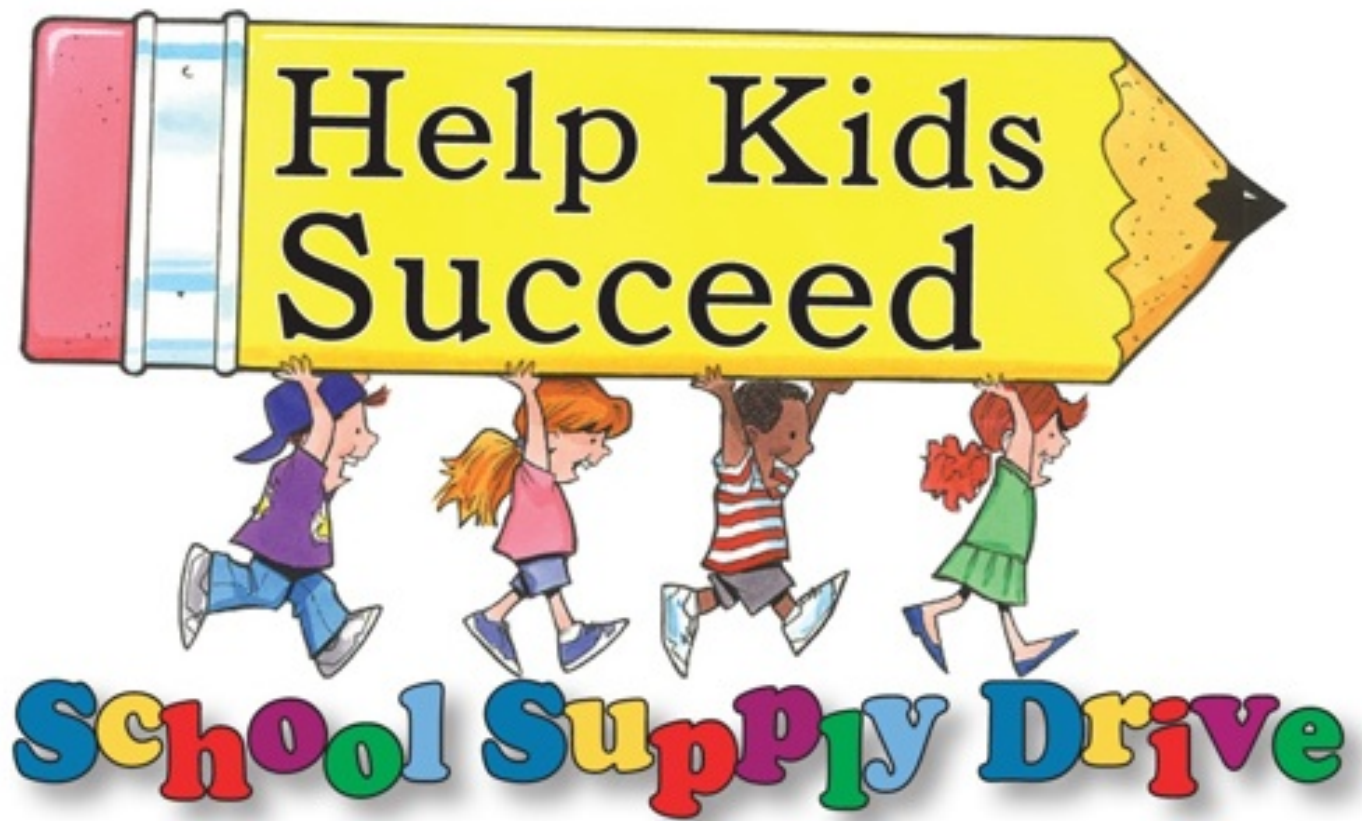


## Church Council Meeting

The Church Council  
did not meet in  
November.

We will have the minutes  
to the December meeting  
in the January issue.





## Donations Needed



Our Advent mission project this year will be supplies for our local schools, as they prepare for the second semester.

A collection box will be in the Narthex starting on Sunday, November 30th through Sunday, December 21st.

What they are in need of most are: Tissues, Disinfecting Wipes, Headphones, Pencil boxes (no pink), Folders (colored with pouches on inside), Pencils, Composition Books, Colored pencils, and Crayons.

Thank you for giving to our children!

# December

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

**Saturday, December 6th** ~ Parents Day Out from 10am-1pm

**Sunday, December 7th** ~ Advent Bible Study @ 9:30am

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

**Thursday, December 11th** ~ Church Council Meeting @ 6:30pm

**Friday, December 12th** ~ New Hope Christmas Parade @ 6pm

**Saturday, December 13th** ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

**Sunday, December 14th** ~ Advent Bible Study @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am

~ Church-wide covered dish Luncheon - after worship

**Saturday, December 20th** ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

**Wednesday, December 24th** ~ Christmas Eve Service @ 7:00pm

**Thursday, December 25th** ~ Christmas Day

**Saturday, December 27th** ~ Sweet Hour of Prayer (SHOP) @ 8:00am

**Sunday, December 28th** ~ Sunday School @ 9:30am

~ Sunday Morning Worship @ 10:30am



# *Beautiful Wrapping, Empty Boxes*

Every December, our homes and churches sparkle with twinkling lights, evergreen branches, and neatly wrapped Christmas packages. Many of these boxes are simply for decoration—beautiful on the outside, but empty inside. And without realizing it, Christians can sometimes become the same way.

We can look put-together: attending services, serving in ministries, posting Scripture on social media, or having a fake smile on our faces. But inside, our hearts might feel tired, distant, or spiritually hollow. Like the festive box beneath the tree, we can appear full of joy, while quietly feeling empty.

But the good news of Christmas—*the good news of Christ Himself*—is that we never have to stay that way!

God didn't design us to be decorative believers. He created us to be vessels filled with His Spirit, His power, His peace, and His love. The world doesn't need Christians who merely look the part; decorated on the outside, but empty inside. The world needs believers who overflow with the presence of Jesus!



An empty box can only offer momentary beauty. But, one filled to the brim, brings blessings, joy, and new life. And in the same way, when we allow God to fill us—through prayer, Scripture, worship, stillness, honesty, and surrender—we carry the things that truly matter - Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

This season is a perfect time to pause and ask, “*Lord, am I wrapped up in activity, or am I filled with You?*” Christ longs to fill every believer with a joy and strength that outlasts the season and overflows into the lives of others.

So let this Christmas be different. Be the package that isn't just pretty on the outside, but full of God's presence on the inside. Because when Christ fills you, you don't just shine—you bless! You don't just decorate the world—you transform it!

Let every wrapped box you see this month remind you: *You were made to be filled!*



# GIFT OF JESUS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

— PSALM 107: 8-9 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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