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**HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**

**5278 N HOPE RD.**

**HOPE, MI 48628**

**PASTOR – BILL CLELAND**

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**February 2023**

**Stop and Listen**

**“Everyone must be quick to hear, slow to speak and slow to anger.” JAMES 1:19**

A group of carpenters building an icehouse in the north country of Canada was taking a lunch break when a boy came upon them and heard their conversation. One was bemoaning a watch he had lost at some point in the morning's work. Though he'd looked for it for a couple of hours, he hadn't been able to find it.

"Would you mind if I went into the ice house and looked?" the boy asked. "Yeah, sure," the men laughed, certain he'd never find anything in a dark room with no electricity. Within 30 seconds, the boy emerged holding the watch in his hand. The carpenters couldn't believe it! "How did you find it?" "It was simple," the boy said. "I just stopped in the middle of the room, stood still and listened for ticking."

Many of us (especially us men) are rightly accused of not listening very well. We rarely stop and take time to focus our attention—to really hear—what our spouse is trying to tell us. Instead, we quickly say things like, "That's dumb, honey. You shouldn't feel that way. You're blowing this all out of proportion."

Those are statements that come from not really seeking to listen and understand where our spouse is coming from. During serious conversations or conflicts, you

need to stop and listen, ask questions or paraphrase what your spouse is saying in order to understand what he or she really means.

Asking a good question can often be like an emotional crowbar to dislodge how somebody really feels. Listening is another way of saying, "You're important to me, and I love you."

Beloved, amongst other important things happening this month is the annual celebration of love called "Valentine's Day." It's as commercialized as Christmas and any other "holiday" but in light of the above story, it can present us an opportunity to renew and refresh our relationships with those whom we love. Take a moment on the 14th to listen with both ears and speak only with your one mouth.

It'll make a world of difference!

Grace, peace, and God's love to you!

Randy

**HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY**



### **GET READY FOR SOME EXCITING FEBRUARY EVENTS:**

There will be a chili cook off in the fellowship hall following church services on February 5. There will be chili from different recipes to sample and the Youth Fellowship group will be serving and working for “tips” to help fund their trip to Cedar Point this summer. Plan to attend and to be recognized as a “big tipper” to support our youth in their ministry to strive to be good citizens. Jillian Brady is the youth leader and the Hope UMC is blessed to have her as the leader of the youth, grades 5 – 12. We need more chili culinary experts to join in the diversity of chili.

If the chili wasn’t satisfying enough, February 12 (Super Bowl Sunday) will be the next Pot-Luck lunch. Bring a dish to pass and an appetite. Pastor Bill hasn’t been able to eat one of everything on the tables yet!

**Hope UMC Trustees and Ad Council** have recommended and approved a funding campaign starting in January 2023 to secure the funds necessary to replace our existing sign with a digital sign. This will allow us to have a way to share multiple messages (with color, formatting and photos/graphics capabilities) to our community about the great work we are doing and services we offer as well as inspirational and motivational messages. Digital sign messages can be modified without going outside in the elements, improves ergonomics and safety and aligns with Hope UMC sustainability and growth objectives. Digital sign donations should be over and above your normal tithing. Please write "digital sign" on your check memo or envelop if you wish to support this important project to sustain the church.

Hope UMC Trustees and Ad Council have approved upgrading our audio/visual (A/V) capability. This pilot project was funded with a \$1000 private donation to demonstrate improvements to our A/V systems. So far, we have received overwhelming support by parishioners for the improvement so far: First we decommissioned unused equipment from our audio system configuration. Next, we purchased a license to electronically copy the lyrics in the Methodist Hymnal to make it easy to display hymn lyrics during the worship service. We also have included all of the content in the Sunday service bulletin for those that may be hearing impaired or near sighted impaired. Visually projecting the bulletin improves the understand of the flow of the service and vastly improves inclusivity and the time it takes guests and new members attending Sunday service to participate. We now have the ability to play videos during church service. Most recently, we connected wirelessly to the projector and mounted it to the ceiling for long-term use. We met with a local A/V company to provide us an assessment of

our audio equipment and make recommendations for audio and video improvements we should consider as our needs and requirements grow. A big THANK YOU goes to Mike Budek and Brian Hock for the installation of the upgrade to the system.

### **FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS**

3 Pastor Bill Cleland  
6 Betty Fillmore  
8 Charlotte Elmore  
13 Judy Page  
18 Wendy LaCourt  
19 Sonya Alexander  
22 Haley Doede  
23 James Crook  
23 Randy Arthur  
23 Dan Holzinger  
24 Terri Horning  
27 Pat Varner

### **MARCH BIRTHDAYS**

2 Pastor Pat Poag  
16 Karen Leuenberger  
23 Tom Fillmore  
24 Bill Horning  
24 Chris Elmore  
25 Pam Geiling  
Caryn Leuenberger

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