



HOPE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
5278 N HOPE RD.
HOPE, MI 48628
PASTOR – BILL CLELAND
PHONE – 989-689-3811
WEBSITE - <https://hopeumchopemi.org/>
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Listening to God this Lent

A young man had been to Wednesday Night Bible Study. The Pastor had shared about listening to God and obeying the Lord's voice. The young man couldn't help but wonder, "Does God still speak to people?" After the study, he went out with some friends for coffee and pie and they discussed the message. Several different people talked about how God had led them in different ways. It was about ten o'clock that evening when the young man started driving home. Sitting in his car, he just began to pray, "God...If you still speak to people, speak to me and I will listen. I will do my best to obey." As he drove down the main street of his town, he had the strangest thought to stop and buy a gallon of milk. He shook his head and said out loud, "God is that you?" He didn't get a reply and started on toward home. But again, the thought, buy a gallon of milk. The young man thought about Samuel and how he didn't recognize the voice of God, and how little Samuel ran to Eli. "Okay, God, in case that is you, I will buy the milk." It didn't seem like too hard a test of obedience. He could always use the milk. He stopped and purchased the gallon of milk and started off toward home. As he passed Seventh Street, he again felt the urge, "Turn Down that street." This is crazy he thought, and drove on past the intersection. Again, he felt that he should turn down Seventh Street. At the next intersection, he turned back and headed down Seventh. Half jokingly, he said out loud, "Okay, God, I will." He drove several blocks, when suddenly, he felt like he should stop. He pulled over to the curb and looked around. He was in a semi-commercial area of town. It wasn't the best but it wasn't the worst of neighborhoods either. The businesses were closed and most of the houses looked dark like the people were already in bed. Again, he sensed something, "Go and give the milk to the people in the house across the street." The young man looked

at the house. It was dark and it looked like the people were either gone or they were already asleep. He started to open the car door and then sat back in the car seat. "Lord, this is insane. Those people are asleep and if I wake them up, they are going to be mad and I will look stupid." Again, he felt like he should go and give the milk. Finally, he opened the car door, "Okay God, if this is you, I will go to the door and I will give them the milk. If you want me to look like a crazy person, okay. I want to be obedient. I guess that will count for something, but if they don't answer right away, I am out of here." He walked across the street and rang the bell. He could hear some noise inside. A man's voice yelled out, "Who is it? What do you want?" Then the door opened before the young man could get away. The man was standing there in his jeans and T-shirt. He looked like he just got out of bed. He had a strange look on his face and he didn't seem too happy to have some stranger standing on his doorstep. "What is it?" The young man thrust out the gallon of milk, "Here, I brought this to you." The man took the milk and rushed down a hallway. Then from down the hall came a woman carrying the milk toward the kitchen. The man was following her holding a baby who was crying. The man had tears streaming down his face. The man began speaking and half crying, "We were just praying. We had some big bills this month and we ran out of money. We didn't have any milk for our baby. I was just praying and asking God to show me how to get some milk." His wife in the kitchen yelled out, "I asked him to send an Angel with some. Are you an Angel?" The young man reached into his wallet and pulled out all the money he had on him and put in the man's hand. He turned and walked back toward his car and the tears were streaming down his face. He knew that God still answers prayers.

Sometimes it's the simplest things that God asks us to do that cause us, if we are obedient to what He's asking, to be able to hear His voice more clearly than ever. Please listen and obey! It will bless you (and the world). Phil 4:13.

Randy

PASTOR'S CORNER

Holy smokes its March! Where did this snow come from? We heard rumblings of a winter storm for Monday from 12 noon until 6 pm. At exactly 12 noon it started snowing and 10 minutes later it was a total whiteout, for several hours... I just got a text that this Friday we are forecasted to get 10 to 15 inches... on top of Mondays 8 inches. I love our Lord, but Mother Nature and the Groundhog have got to go!!!

February was amazing. On the 5th, we had the baptism for Franklin John Fillmore, how very cool was that. Son of John & Alyssa Fillmore and baby brother to Miss Iris. Such a sweet little man and a wonderful young family. But, also on the 5th we had a Chili-Cook-off. I believe 11 different chilis' were present for our

tasting pleasure. The Coveted Golden Ladle went to **“Terri Budek”** for her white Chili. She raised \$186.00 I believe. But the real winners were the Youth, the **cook-off raised \$886.00**. Oh yes, also on the afternoon of February 5th, after the Chili-Cook-Off the youth and the chaperones took an afternoon trip to Snow Snake to go snow tubing... Big thanks to our Youth director Jillian and the chaperones who accompanied the youth Lynsey, Brian and Daniel... You make these events possible...

Some youth events you might want to look forward to supporting in some way are, **Overnight stays** or events at the church, a **Corn Hole** Tournament, **Rummage Sale**, **Loons games**, Trip to **Mackinaw Island**, walk the **Mackinaw Bridge** on Labor Day, a **Scavenger Hunt**, Bowling, **Canoeing the Au Sable** or local river, Trip to **Cedar Point** this summer and maybe even a **water park**. And there will be some work involved as well. Local Mission projects like raking and yard work for our members, helping at the North Midland Center, Soup Kitchens for a day, maybe even help at the East Michigan Food Bank for a day. There is much work to do...

Food Distributions ~ It's no secret that I love feeding people. I have worked nearly 110 Pop-Up-Food pantries in the thumb area prior to coming here last July. I also worked one in February while home between doctor appointments. It has been a goal of mine (and also the Boards desire) to bring this life changing program here to Hope UMC. I am happy to announce that we are almost set up as an agent of the East Michigan Food Bank and we will be announcing very soon the date for our first event. Each event or Pantry requires about 15 to 20 people (volunteers) to operate. Setup will begin at 9 am when the truck arrives, the Giveaway runs two hours 10 until 12 noon. I plan to give any left overs to the North Midland Center to finish distributing. Every distribution serves approximately 250 families. What a blessing as we pass out \$35,000 to \$45,000 of food in just 120 minutes... Clean-up takes a bit to stack pallets and get rid of Cardboard from the many boxes. Each truck costs \$1,200.00 but, in my recent calls to the Food Bank, they are currently distributing trucks at No cost in our area. We want to take advantage of this while it lasts. With the free truck availability this could be a monthly event while the grant lasts. **More information to come!**

Confirmation and Membership Classes ~ Another huge blessing, we currently have 5 students and 4 Adults, I believe, in the process of membership classes. Because the classes are virtually the same, I am running them together.

1st Class ~ March 5th ~ 6 pm Hope UMC we will discuss Church History.

2nd Class ~ March 19th ~ 6pm Hope UMC ~ what defines the Methodist Church.

3rd Class ~ March 26th ~ 6pm Hope UMC ~ How do you live out this calling?

What do you expect? How will life change?

There will be plenty of time for questions and we will be done at 7pm each night.

The remaining question is, when will we receive these new members into the Hope United Methodist Church.

All must be able to attend. 1. Palm Sunday 4/2/23 Communion Sunday.

2. Easter Sunday 4/9/23 very festive...

3. Pentecost Sunday 5/28/23 ~ read Acts 2: 40-41.

Your Best Lent Ever “Journey to the Cross” ~ we passed out booklets at church on Sunday 2/25/23 and ran out, but more will be available this coming Sunday 3/5/23. This time of Lent is a very special and precious time in the church. Jesus is near the end of his three year ministry as he begins to discuss his death and resurrection to follow. In typical Jesus style of parables and the fact that this is all new, never heard before teaching. **How can a man be born again?** How can we die, yet live again! **What is this resurrection that you speak of?** In this time of Lent, this 40 days, we are to live more intentionally more purposefully, more humbly... **What will you change?** Even if only for a few hours or a day, what might you give up or let go of as we relive this special time of year?

As we enter April, the first **Sunday the 2nd is communion Sunday** and Palm Sunday... Maybe even Confirmation Sunday. We enter Holy week saying Hosanna to the King, as he enters Jerusalem riding a donkey. Then just 5 days later we will be worshipping at **The Dale UMC at 1:00 pm for our Good Friday** Service with a Tenebrae Service of scriptures and silence, as our Lord and King has been crucified. Then on the third day, a beautiful, triumphal, unbelievable resurrection of our Lord and Savior on Easter Sunday April 9th. The tomb is empty ~ He lives, Halleluiah!!! All three churches will have services at their regular times, **Dale UMC 8:30 am ~ Edenville UMC 9:45 am ~ Hope UMC at 11:00 am... THE TOMB IS EMPTY!**

My Course of Study (Seminary Classes) are going very well. I thank you all for your patience and prayers during this time of learning. I took **Bible III** last fall, **A-**. Currently in **Missions and Evangelism**, ends on March 18 currently **A**. My next class starts March 9, 2023 **Ethics** ~ pray for me as I switch from GBHEM in Tennessee to Saint Paul's School of Theology in Kansas City (third school since last Fall) for **Ethics**, it will end on April 27. I'll then be off through July 17th. 10 whole weeks off, woo hoo! My final class **Bible IV** will begin July 17 again at Saint Paul's School of Theology and I will complete that class on August 28, 2023. Then I'm done.

As we crowd Spring, just 3 short weeks away (at least on the Calendar) my thoughts turn again to our roadside clean-up on M-30. A Trashy time with great conversation. Also, blooming flowers and the return of green lush lawns for a time.

Please stay safe in this time of Lent, in this time of unpredictable spring weather. Let us lift each other in prayer often, as we continue to be the bride of Christ, his church.

Blessings Always,
Pastor Bill

Youth Program Update

During the chili cookoff, The Youth waited on tables and made \$886 towards their trip to Cedar Point this summer. Thank you to all who participated. This is money will be used to help launch the mission work and youth ministry activities.

Following the cook-off the Youth made their way to Snowsnake Mountain where they had fun tubing down the mountain. We finished up the day by going to Cops N Doughnut to get our favorite pastry.

The youth met on February 19th at 6 pm. They planned their activities for the year and are working on confirmation classes. Besides Cedar Point, other functions being considered are Frankenmuth Water Park, ice skating, bonfires and pool parties.

Youth will be working on a local mission project this year. Possibly a soup kitchen in the Midland or Saginaw area. If you are interested in joining the youth program please contact Pastor Bill at 989 689-3811.



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

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

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

3 Duff Sova
4 Bill Elmore
9 Kathy Arthur
10 Bob (Gomer) Pyle
12 Katie Trewhella
15 Brian Hock
16 Jillian Brady
19 Dale Shedden
23 Phil Leigeb
24 Avery Crego
24 Roni Cassady
27 Shelly Brady
27 Amanda Heatherington

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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED