



Pleasant News

Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church

In This Issue – March 2020

- Pg 1 Inspiration Point
- Pg 3 Getting To Know You
- Pg 4 Memorials and Honors
- Pg 5 Bible Study Opportunities
- Pg 6 Recommended Reading
- Pg 7 Fellowship Meal/
Backpack Buddies
- Pg 8 Recipe Box
- Pg 9 Easter at the Grove
- PG 11 UMW
- Pg 13 Did You Know
- Pg 14 Word Search

Worship Times:

9:00am Traditional (Sanc)
10:00am Sunday School
11:00am KidLife Children
11:00am Lifepoint Service (FLC)

Pleasant Grove
United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 681900
1915 Oakdale Road
Charlotte, NC 28216
704-392-2387
www.thegrovetoday.org

Inspiration Point

Following World War II, that generation, who had suffered so much through the great depression, then the War where millions of sons and daughters, husbands and fathers had been killed, they turned to God! Churches boomed everywhere! All over the place large churches were built to house all those families! Look at our church and go into the history room and look at the pictures of those folks over the years! The house was packed! All the rooms were full of Sunday School Classes! The Rhinehart Class had standing room only! Over 50 people were in that class!

Now, no one meets in the Chapel. Our total Sunday School attendance averages between 50 and 60 people! We have lost the Baby Boom Generation, so then, we lost their children: generation X, generation Y and now the millennials. Do you realize that if we had not started the second service with the contemporary format that our worship attendance would be around 80 people in the traditional service only? At this point, second service attendance is between 55 and 60 worshippers each Sunday! We have young adults and we have 4 to 5 children in that service! These folks are finding their way into the Sunday School classes and are beginning to assume leadership roles in the structure of the church! They are turning out for the Bible study groups and are excited about what God is doing in their lives!

In the Book of Luke, we see Jesus telling a parable about a man who planted a fig tree. For three years, he searched for fruit among it's leaves but found none. As he was about to cut it down, the man who tended the trees told him to leave it alone for one more year. He would dig around it and fertilize it, then after a year if it bore no fruit, then cut it down!

(Inspiration Point continued from page #1)

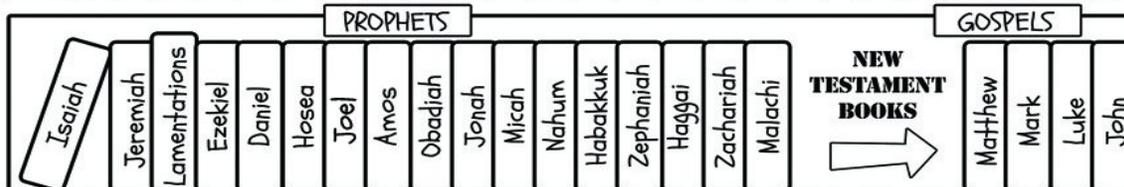
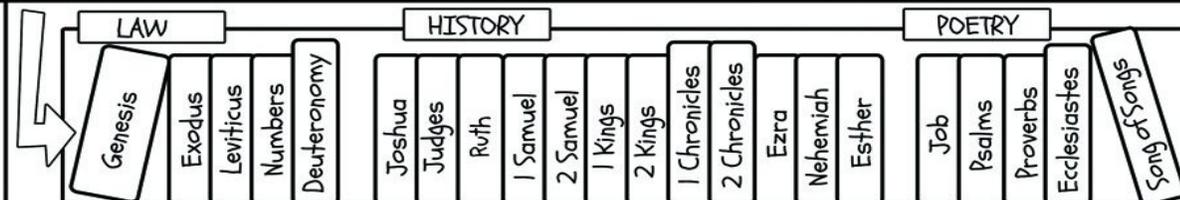
A healthy church grows! People come to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior there! We were not growing but were losing members by the tens! Maybe that was God's way of pruning us back so that we could produce more fruit. Thank God that He helped us to begin a new and exciting service that is growing! Because we are producing good fruit, we will survive into the future!

Now, if you think I am being negative about our first service, let me remind you that that is our rootstock! It is from that stock that all future growth will come! Our rootstock is rooted and firmly set in the ground, with deep roots that help us sustain our Spiritual Life for the foreseeable future! For our part, let us all get excited about our personal relationship with our Lord and get back to basics as the Pastor has been teaching us! Praying, reading and meditating on the Bible, and fellowshiping with like-minded believers! Our good works are a natural outflow from all this! But the fruit the Lord is seeking is a deep relationship with Him that brings disciples to Him and keeps us excited about what He is doing today in our lives! This is a goal we can all work towards! Keep praying and keep praising His Name!

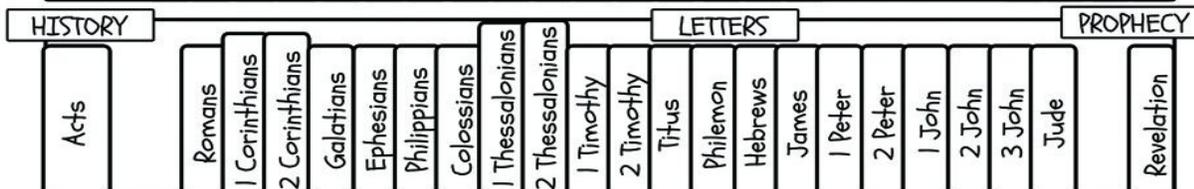
Brother Phil

Books of the Bible

OLD TESTAMENT BOOKS



NEW TESTAMENT BOOKS



Getting to Know You!!!



Whenever we get the chance to get to know one another better here at Pleasant Grove, we take it!!! One way we can do that is by highlighting our newest members in our church newsletter. Shirley Williamson has been a part of Pleasant Grove for quite a few months now and we were so happy when she joined our sweet

church and made it official. She has jumped right in, too! She faithfully attends worship each week and is very active and involved with our United Methodist Women. Her enthusiasm and willingness to participate in church activities are wonderful examples of the Christian Life for us all. We recently had the opportunity to ask Shirley some questions about herself, her life, and her hopes and dreams. Now, we would like to share with you all a little bit about Shirley Williamson.

Pleasant News: Where were you born and raised?

Shirley Williamson: I was born and raised in Lincoln, Nebraska. We lived on a farm and I attended a one room school house from kindergarten through eighth grade. On our farm, we raised cattle, hogs, chickens, and corn. I was active with the Future Farmers of America and Scouts. I graduated from high school and moved to Palo Alto, California. My first job was working in the bank as a teller while also going to school.

PN: Tell us a little bit about your family.

SW: I have been married for 50 years to my husband James. We have two daughters and two sons, and nine grandchildren ranging in age from 18 to 31. James and I spent our married life in California. I worked for the same company for 21 years in the financial field. Both James and I were involved with youth sports, serving as coaches and board members. After we retired we traveled for several years across the United States and abroad. When we finished our traveling we both became involved with the local Elks Lodge chairing monthly events, serving as officers of the lodge and chairing the annual Children's Christmas Party for 20 years. I was a member of the Elk's Women's Club as well as an officer, serving in several different capacities.

I was an active member of Pine Ridge Women's Club for 20 years and served on their board of trustees. This was a non-profit group that raised funds for local scholarships, youth groups and volunteer fire fighters.

PN: What was your line of work or what sorts of jobs have you had in the past?

SW: My entire line of work, from start to retirement, was in the financial field.

PN: What are your hobbies and interests?

SW: I love to read, love to play cards, and love to serve others through volunteer work.

PN: What is something on your bucket list?

SW: Actually, I have completed the things that were on my bucket list. Now I just hope to stay healthy and enjoy what I have around me.

PN: What is your favorite passage or verse of scripture?

SW: My favorite is Psalm 46:1 "God is always there to help, God is our refuge and strength and ever present to help when we are in trouble."

PN: What brought you to Pleasant Grove?

SW: We relocated to North Carolina after losing our home in the California wildfires. We lived with our daughter in Charlotte for a while and then started searching for our own home. We found the duplex where we live now, here in Oakdale, with Pleasant Grove Church just down the street from us. A perfect fit!

PN: What is something you dream about, or wish, for Pleasant Grove?

SW: I Hope that Pleasant Grove continues to be the caring church and community that I fell in love with!

PN: What do you enjoy most about being a part of Pleasant Grove?

SW: I most enjoy the people. They have made me feel welcome from the first day we visited the church.

PN: Tell us anything else that you would like to about yourself or your relationship with the church.

SW: I have enjoyed my short relationship with Pleasant Grove and look forward to many more years to come!

Well, Shirley, we also look forward to many more years with you...serving God and our neighbors together. We are so happy that you have made your church home with us! We know that you bring a wealth of experience to the table and will be an invaluable member of our church as we continue to minister to the community of Oakdale and beyond. So now, we just want to say...

Welcome Home, Shirley! Welcome Home!

THE FOLLOWING GIFTS WERE MADE TO THE CHURCH IN MEMORY OR IN HONOR OF:

IN MEMORY

Sonny Watkins

Gene and Nancy Edwards

Ed Sing

Gene and Nancy Edwards

Tommy Brown

Ray and Trena McClure

Anonymous

Jewel West

UMW – Circle #3 – Family Life Center

Steve and Karen Dellinger

Jacqueline Abernathy

Ray and Trena McClure

Anonymous

Pauline Melton

Jean and Joseph Delgado

Steve and Karen Dellinger

Amy Reynolds

Pina Nance

Anonymous – Family Life Center

Troy Wilson

Hazel Sanders

Bruce and Myrna Fourcher

Laura Gilliland

James and Shirley Goodrum

Dwight and Reba Henry

Steve and Maria McClure

Glenn and Karen Dedrick

Anonymous

Genesis Sunday School Class

Rick and Lynda Elliott – Cemetery Fund

UMW – Circle #3 – Family Life Center

Roy and Margaret Parker

Bob and Bonnie Bridges

Steve and Karen Dellinger

Ray and Trena McClure

Pina Nance

Tom and Julia Grey

Gene and Nancy Edwards

Roger and Patti Beard

Covenant Sunday School Class

Anonymous – Family Life Center

Brenda Watkins – Family Life Center

IN HONOR

Ray McClure

Rick and Lynda Elliott – Cemetery Fund

Maria McClure

Rick and Lynda Elliott – Cemetery Fund

Jane Adams

Rick and Lynda Elliott – Cemetery Fund

Bible Study Opportunities:



“Bible Prayer”

Pastor Phil (Study Leader)

Meets Thursdays at 7:00pm (FLC Rm 201, 14 weeks)

“The Unshakable Truth”

Pastor Byron (Study Leader)

Meets Tuesdays at 6:30pm (FLC, 12 weeks)

*If you are interested in attending any of these studies please contact
the church office to reserve your spot and to order a book.*

Thank You!

What to do when you feel ... Discouraged?

Remember The Following Verse!

Therefore do not cast away your confidence,

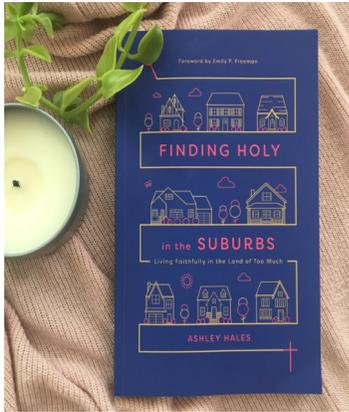
which has great reward.

For you have need of endurance,

so that after you have done the will of God,

you may receive the promise. (Hebrews 10: 35 – 36)

Recommended Reading



There has sometimes been debate about our little community of Oakdale. Some have seen it as a rural community; and this was certainly the case many years ago. Some have seen it as suburban; certainly hard to argue with due to our proximity to Charlotte’s urban center. No matter your point of view, we cannot dismiss the fact that our community, the community that Pleasant Grove has been called to serve, is changing and growing. Our reading recommendation for this month, Finding Holy in the Suburbs, by Ashley Hales, takes a good look at life in the suburbs... particularly living as a Christian in the suburbs. You may think this is an odd subject for a book but when you read the tag line on the front cover you begin to understand her questions and her quest for the

truth of the Christian life. The tag line reads, “Living Faithfully in the Land of Too Much.”

Ashley Hales has lived in several different settings throughout her adult life. She grew up in the suburbs. She has lived abroad. She has lived in an urban center city environment in Salt Lake City. And, most recently, she has returned with her pastor-husband to live in the suburbs. It is in this returning to the suburbs that she has begun to question how God would have her live out her purpose, her calling, while living in the land of affluence and plenty. We have all read the opinions of those who think that the only way we can truly serve God is by living abroad and serving His people in a third world country. And then there are those who think that the only way to live out your true calling is to live in an urban, downtown setting, serving the homeless and volunteering with one of the many altruistic causes found in a large city. Ashley challenges these lines of thought though. She challenges us to see who God has placed in front of us and who God wants us to love on with His love...right where we are.

The backdrop for this book is the familiar story of “The Prodigal Son”. She returns to its narrative and its characters time and again throughout her writing. The following is an excerpt from her book.

“This story (the story of “The Prodigal Son”) shows us our deep hunger to belong, to find home, to root ourselves in place, and how, when we’re hungry, we fill ourselves up with other things that promise to sate our hungers instead of running home to our Father. Our places are good gifts; home is how we begin to know who we are. Yet when we use the gifts of our places—when we use the suburbs—as “ultimate things,” like pastor Tim Keller is fond of saying, we worship them. This book is a gentle call to all of us in the suburbs to come home, to find belonging not in what we buy or how we constantly center ourselves, but in loving God and our neighbor. As individuals, families, and churches commit to love and sacrifice for our neighborhoods and subdivisions, we will find our place.”

Ashley Hales shows us, through her honest and personal look at life as a suburbanite, the importance of repentance, the beauty of forgiveness, and our longing for belovedness. She then invites us to live a life made of hospitality, generosity, and vulnerability. She shows us that, no matter where we find ourselves living, we are all called to live loving God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving our neighbors as ourselves. So, consider picking up a copy of Finding Holy in the Suburbs. It will make you think and will make your life richer and fuller no matter what your zip code may be!

-Book Recommendation submitted by Sherri Brown



Pleasant Grove United Methodist Church

1915 Oakdale Road, Charlotte, NC

March 18th - 5:00pm to 7:00pm



Please Join Us For a Warm Meal and Great Fellowship!

**Menu: Spaghetti, Meatballs, Salad, Bread,
Drinks, Desserts**



***Backpack Buddies Nears the Home Stretch of it's
Tenth Year!!!***



Backpack Buddies is in the final few months of this year's ministry to families in need. Each month, we put one particular item in the spotlight for donation. These items are not normally donated by our monthly sponsors and are not the first items that come to mind when you are in the store and want to pick something up for Backpack Buddies. For the month of March, please consider picking up a can or two of Vegetable Beef Soup. It can be any brand and any combination of meat and vegetables. A can of soup seems to be such a simple thing...but, a resourceful parent can turn that simple can of soup into a nutritious and filling meal for one or more of their children. Thanks in advance for meeting the needs of this outreach ministry!



The Recipe Box

For this month's recipe, we decided to dig way back into the "old green church cookbook." It has been said by more than one great cook that this cookbook is one of the best ever published by a church. It is certainly filled with some great recipes. Just thumbing through it and reading the names of all the wonderful cooks who submitted recipes brings back beautiful memories of church gatherings, family reunions, and bereavement meals taken into the homes of church members at a time of loss.

One of those accomplished cooks was Mrs. Helen McCall. Her recipe for *Chicken and Rice Casserole* has probably graced many of our tables in some form or another. It is an easy and simple dish to put together, bake and serve. It easily fits into the category of comfort food and would be welcome at your family's dinner table any night of the week.

We hope you enjoy *Chicken and Rice Casserole*!



Chicken and Rice Casserole

- ½ stick of margarine
- 1 cup uncooked rice
- 4-6 boneless chicken breasts
- 1 can cream of mushroom soup
- 1 can French onion soup
- 2 cans water



Melt margarine in long Pyrex dish. Sprinkle rice in margarine. Lay chicken breasts over rice and margarine. Mix together the mushroom soup, onion soup, and water. Pour over the chicken and rice. Bake, uncovered, at 450 degrees, for about an hour.



Easter at the Grove

It is so hard to believe that Easter is right around the corner! Weren't we just gathering together for Christmas parties and decorating our homes and church for the Christmas season? As unbelievable as it might seem, Easter, with all of its richness and meaning in our faith life, will be upon us before we know it. We want to go ahead and inform our congregation and community of the upcoming schedule of services so that you can go ahead now and make plans to participate with your church family.



Palm Sunday is on April 5th. We will have our regular schedule of services at both 9:00 and 11:00. During these services we will commemorate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem and will wave our own palm branches together.

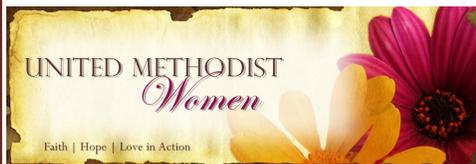
Our **Maundy Thursday** service will be on April 9th, at 6:30 PM. This service will be held in the sanctuary and will include a time of meditation centered on Jesus' life just before His crucifixion. We will also partake of the sacrament of Holy Communion together.



And then...THEN...there is **Easter Sunday!!!** The entire morning will be a celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! We hope that you won't think of this day as a buffet to pick and choose from. But, instead, that you will think of the entire morning as a continuum of celebration! Join us at our Sunrise service at 7:00 AM at the Scout Hut on Pleasant Grove Road, just across from our cemetery. Please bring your own lawn chair to this service. Then plan to be with us for a sweet time of fellowship, in the fellowship hall, just after this service. Breakfast biscuits, juice, and coffee will be provided. Our celebrations continue with worship at 9:00, which includes our annual Easter cantata presented by the Chancel Choir. This musical offering will help us all focus on the tremendous gift that the Resurrection gives us and will quicken our hearts with the true JOY that Easter brings! Sunday school classes will meet as usual and then we are all expected to finish out our morning at the 11:00 service as Pastor Byron delivers his Easter message. We do hope that you and your family can attend all of our Easter offerings. We just know that if you do, your heart will be touched and your life will be changed in some most amazing ways!!!



News from the United Methodist Women



The women of Circle #6 met on Monday, February 10th, and had a great evening together. The focus of the meeting was the Backpack Buddies Ministry at Pleasant Grove. Sherri Brown read a devotional and explained the Backpack Buddies Ministry to our members. Then, all who were present packed the backpacks for that week.

The United Methodist Women from Pleasant Grove showed up in good numbers for the Annual Ecumenical Luncheon at Paw Creek Presbyterian Church on Saturday, February 15th. At the event, a delicious salad lunch was enjoyed and Molly Grantham, of WBTV News, delivered a wonderful program on the topic of “The Real that We Are.”

The Metro District Mission Study will be on March 14th at Pineville UMC. We have several women from Pleasant Grove who plan to be in attendance.

Both of our Circles will be observing the “Call to Prayer and Self-Denial” program this month. Circle #6 will meet on Monday, March 9th, at 6:00 PM. Circle #3 will meet on Tuesday, March 10th at 2:00 PM. A special offering for missions will be taken at the conclusion of each program. We welcome visitors and new members to this special meeting.



Preschool Post



WOW! The end of February is here. Spring is just around the corner and we only have three more months to enjoy our preschool students before summer break arrives! February was a busy month. The three-year-old and four-year-old classes continued to enjoy the “cave” during this last full month of Winter. The children would go “hibernate” in the cave, watch the snowfall from the ceiling, and enjoy a special and fun story time there. Each of our

classes had a Valentine’s Day party, thanks to the generosity of our Preschool parents. On Shrove Tuesday, all of our classes enjoyed pancakes and began to understand the significance of “Fat Tuesday.” During chapel with Mr. Colin, the kids really got into creating the storm and taking an adventurous journey with Jonah.

The threes and fours also had a sweet time sharing their songs of love with the Congregant Meal Program. Jeannie Upton, our resident storyteller, shared stories and information about our founding fathers and the importance of President’s Day.

The preschool experienced our very first “shelter in place” event as early Spring storms pushed through Oakdale. Everyone handled it beautifully! The children sat in the downstairs hallway while we all read stories and sang songs together. A week later we had snow flurries! And, of course, RAIN! As we make our way through these last three months, we will all be very busy preparing for our end-of-the-year programs and the many fun things that Spring will bring!

So, What is Lent Anyway???



Many of us are well aware of the fact that we have just entered into the season of Lent. But most of us probably don't have a real firm grasp on what this season really is, what it means in our spiritual life, or what we are supposed to do with it. Let's take a look at some of the facts and see if we can get a better understanding of this very important liturgical season in the Christian Church.

Lent is a period of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday. The word "Lent" comes from the Anglo Saxon word "lencten," meaning "lengthen," and refers to the lengthening days of Spring. The forty-day season represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, being tempted by Satan and preparing to begin His earthly ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time for self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts. Later it became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, we focus on our relationship with God, how we can grow as a disciple of Jesus Christ, and how we can extend ourselves. We often choose to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "little Easter" and each Sunday tempers the reverent spirit of Lent with a joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

As we journey through Lent, looking inward and examining our Christian walk, let us also look ahead and truly prepare ourselves for the beauty, wonder, excitement, and unconditional love that Resurrection Sunday brings to us all!!!

Lenten Prayer

GOD OF GOODNESS AND MERCY,

**HEAR MY PRAYER AS I BEGIN THIS LENTEN JOURNEY WITH YOU.
LET ME BE HONEST WITH MYSELF AS I LOOK INTO MY HEART AND SOUL,
NOTICING THE TIMES I TURN AWAY FROM YOU. GUIDE ME AS I HUMBLY SEEK
TO REPENT AND RETURN TO YOUR LOVE.**

**MAY HUMILITY GUIDE MY EFFORTS TO BE RECONCILED WITH YOU AND LIVE FOREVER
IN YOUR ABUNDANT GRACE.**

**TRANSFORM ME THIS LENT, HEAVENLY FATHER. GIVE ME THE STRENGTH TO
COMMIT MYSELF TO GROW CLOSER TO YOU EACH DAY.**

AMEN.



Did You Know???



...that the Methodist church is working in Nairobi, Kenya to offer hope in the slums through a church school? Well, we are!!!

On the eastern side of Nairobi, Huruma United Methodist Church's primary school is providing new hope and educational opportunities for vulnerable and at-risk children living in the Mathare Valley slums. In the Valley more than half a million households reside in an area that is roughly half of a square mile. Children who are not in school through the eighth grade often succumb to a culture of gangs, drugs, prostitution and other criminal activities. It is estimated that each year approximately

13,000 young girls from Mathare leave school due to pregnancy, never to return. All totaled, there are about 70,000 school-aged children in the Valley, with only four schools to educate them.

I think we can all agree that these seem to be some very dire circumstances. But, there is hope and it is being offered by the United Methodist Church! Since 2016, Huruma UMC's New Hope Education Center has been providing educational and psychosocial support to orphans and other vulnerable children. The children who attend the school face numerous obstacles. Most miss school because of bad weather, illness, lack of school fees, family reasons and work-related activities. Parents sometimes sell their children's textbooks to satisfy their addiction to alcohol...others sell the books to put food on their tables. Many of the students are orphans and simply cannot afford the basic items needed to attend school.

The New Hope Education Center has 70 students in grades 1-6 and also offers early childhood education. The Rev. Davies Musigo, senior pastor of the church and coordinator of the school says that the mission of the school is to offer basic education to children who wouldn't otherwise have that opportunity. This is made possible by partnerships with UNICEF, community and key stakeholders, the country's ministry of Education, civil societies and community leaders. Parents of current students are also key to the growth and success of the school, as they are trained to talk to families about the importance of education for all children. Even with these partnerships, the school faces many challenges. Financial struggles make it hard to retain qualified teachers. Their temporary building is also a concern as the government threatens to close the school for not meeting building standards. New Hope is primarily funded through individual donors and the church. Despite these many hurdles, Huruma UMC is making strides in reaching children in unique and life changing ways.

Recently, Huruma UMC hosted a mission team from Clarksbury UMC of Harmony, NC. The team was lead by the Rev. Cliff Wall, pastor, and the Rev. Matt Reynolds, founding president of Spirit and Truth of Tipp City, Ohio. Clarksbury Church has committed to be in a long-term mission partnership with Huruma UMC and New Hope Education Center.

Edna Anyango, deputy head teacher, says that teaching in the slums comes with its own set of challenges. Sometimes students come to class with a gun or with drugs. Some of the students have spent the night breaking into houses and pulling the trigger on "troublesome" victims. Some students, as young as 10 years old, are already engaging in sexual activities, sometimes as a part of the family's business. The teachers must become, in essence, a real parent...trying to instill the right knowledge, skills, and attitudes in their students in the best way possible.

With hope generated from the support of churches like Clarksbury UMC, New Hope Education Center can fulfill its mission to advance the lives of less-privileged children and provide a healthy and hopeful future.

And hope is a good thing, maybe the best of things!

(The information in this article first appeared on the UMC website on February 25, 2020 and was written by Gad Maiga who is a communicator for the Kenya-Ethiopia Conference.)

THE CHURCH

N	T	L	N	O	I	T	A	R	A	P	E	R	P
E	M	E	G	N	I	R	E	T	S	I	N	I	M
N	E	E	D	E	D	N	S	C	O	M	M	O	N
P	P	A	P	N	I	O	J	G	L	C	E	R	E
H	A	L	E	O	A	N	R	O	E	W	E	I	L
E	R	S	O	P	S	S	R	A	T	E	J	L	P
L	O	O	T	V	S	M	I	L	U	L	G	O	H
D	S	N	P	O	E	O	I	S	T	P	O	S	E
E	B	H	E	I	R	S	C	H	O	O	L	T	A
R	E	E	N	R	E	C	N	O	C	E	R	U	R
L	L	L	G	N	I	S	I	A	R	P	Y	D	T
Y	I	P	D	N	U	O	S	C	H	A	T	Y	S
L	E	O	Y	A	D	N	U	S	E	L	O	L	A
N	F	S	F	E	L	L	O	W	S	H	I	P	O

PASTOR
 PEOPLE
 PRAISING
 GOALS
 SOUND
 HEARTS
 MINISTERING
 PREPARATION
 ELDERLY
 SCHOOL
 BELIEF
 CONCERN
 NEEDED
 STUDY
 JOIN
 COMMON
 SUNDAY
 LOVE
 HELP
 FELLOWSHIP

Play this puzzle online at : <https://thewordsearch.com/puzzle/359438/>