

On the Rock

October 2020

A publication of:

Rockawalkin United Methodist Church

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Rev. Howard F. Travers, Jr., Pastor

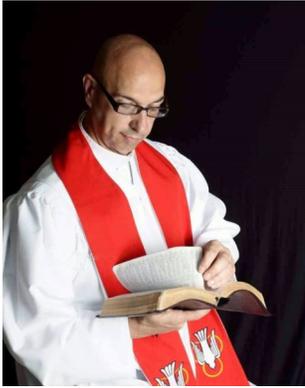
pastorhoward@rockawalkin.com

(Office Hours: Tuesday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.)

Sunday Worship Service - 8:30 a.m.

(Sundays @ CrossRoads Community Property - weather permitting)

Sharing Christ's Love Through Word & Action



Rev. Howard F. Travers, MA, MDiv, CT

“What If The Church Left The Building?”

Shortly after beginning my ministry here at Rockawalkin Church, a parishioner came into the Church Office wearing a tee shirt, which read, “The church has left the building.” It certainly was not a new slogan - in fact, I had seen the slogan many times previously in other settings. More recently, however, I have found those words strangely prophetic. Lately, I have been wandering, what if the church left the building? What if this COVID-19 disruption is actually that deep?

In many ways, physical locations become an emotional attraction. Environmental psychologists refer to this phenomenon as “place attachment.” It is an emotional bond between person and place. It is highly influenced by an individual and his or her personal experiences. There is a considerable amount of research dedicated to defining what makes a place “meaningful” enough for “place attachment” to occur. We do know that “place attachment” is multi-dimensional and is largely rooted in a heavy influence of individualistic experiences and emotions that influences the attachment. Great memories of individual meaningful experiences over the years centered on our faith in God and fellowship with one another ... family weddings; funerals; communions; baby dedications and baptisms ... have all deepened our emotional ties and bonds to the physical location and structure we identify as being Rockawalkin Church.

Some parishioners I have talked to in recent weeks are just eager to return to a similitude of normalcy. They are uncomfortable with change and its accompanying emotions. They simply want to return to something remotely familiar to them. Online worship in front of an electronic device ... worship that is distanced from others ... worship in an empty room with no one else present ...

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... worship in a vehicle or behind a mask is not what they are used to and are definitely not comfortable engaging in.

I have also heard from those who view the COVID-19 crisis strictly from a political viewpoint. It is their view that COVID-19 is the government's attempt to erode the constitutional rights of its citizens. Under the First Amendment, gathering, or not, for corporate worship is an individual choice and freedom granted by our Founding Fathers and should not remain subject to government controls, oversight, or direction. Given that, I suppose in every national crisis there are conspiracy theories that abound and at this point, I have likely heard or been emailed articles related to them all.

Despite all this, here is what I do know. For those churches that have already reopened to inside worship, many Pastors and ministry leaders (both locally and nationally) have stated their belief that they opened too soon and are now regretting that decision - wishing they had delayed opening. Especially for those churches that have suffered a COVID-19 outbreak and have been forced to shut down and reopen again. One Salisbury church has had to reopen and close their doors twice since reopening in July due to an outbreak of COVID-19 among church staff. What are the chances of any parishioner or guest coming even remotely close to their church for a very long time to come?

Other church and ministry leaders who have reopened their doors to inside worship are admittedly surprised and frustrated by the surprisingly low return-to-church attendance trends.

Though church attendance has been very slowly increasing with more states relaxing COVID-19 restrictions, still most churches are only averaging between 10-25% of their pre-COVID-19 attendance numbers.

Prior to the COVID-19 outbreak in March, our average worship attendance hovered close to, or slightly above, (90) people. Now, with social-distancing restrictions of 6-feet in all directions, the maximum number of people we can safely accommodate in our sanctuary is less than (40).

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The same holds true for accommodations in the Rockawalkin Community Hall. In light of the numbers and these reports from around the country, it comes as no surprise that (1) in (6) churches is choosing to delay reopening until sometime in 2021.

Like many churches, we continue to offer online worship services and Bible studies and we are continuing to utilize social media platforms to reach the growing number of online seekers who (much like in the aftermath of 9-11) are seeking answers and solutions to their fears and distresses. Though there may be resistance by some, I believe this is where much of the future of the church lies. Some churches, like ours, are also taking advantage of property and parking lots to accommodate outside worship opportunities.

We are capitalizing on both - online worship and open-aired opportunities. With the recent purchase of new cameras and recording equipment, perhaps you have noticed improvement in our online broadcasts. These improvements will continue as we adjust our lighting, sound, and introduce other tools and features to our virtual capabilities.

In addition, with the recent approval to erect a pavilion on the CrossRoads property, we will have even more opportunities for covered outside worship activities, campmeetings, concerts, community events, and more.

Perhaps you have noticed the survey markers. We are moving forward as planned. Most of us are very anxious to resume what is most familiar to us in terms of worship. However, what if people have not left our church? What if they have just left our building? Moreover, what if they have already decided they are not coming back regularly inside, or at all?

Some of our congregants who I have spoken to in recent weeks who are not returning to inside worship are not leaving Christianity ... They are not even leaving Rockawalkin Church. They are just not coming back to the building, and perhaps they will not even after there's a vaccine and the COVID-19 crisis is a distant memory. I am not saying this is good (I do not like it either). I am saying it is, in all likelihood, real.

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Leaders who cooperate with reality tend to do far better than those who compete with it.

Here is what is critical. God certainly is not dead. Our church's mission, "to share Christ's love through word and action" is not dead either. However, many of our methods might be. For this reason, I have been encouraging our church leadership in recent weeks not to consider reopening the church but rather to consider relaunching the church. Never before in our 180-year history have the church doors been closed for so long. Now more than ever, let us utilize the 20-20 Vision I introduced in 2019 based on your input, to relaunch the church even better than it was previously with innovative approaches and strategies to ministry opportunities. Instead of the church serving as a mere "collection box" of Christians, let us utilize our building as a launching station for ministry to our parishioners, to our community at large, and to the world through available means of the internet.

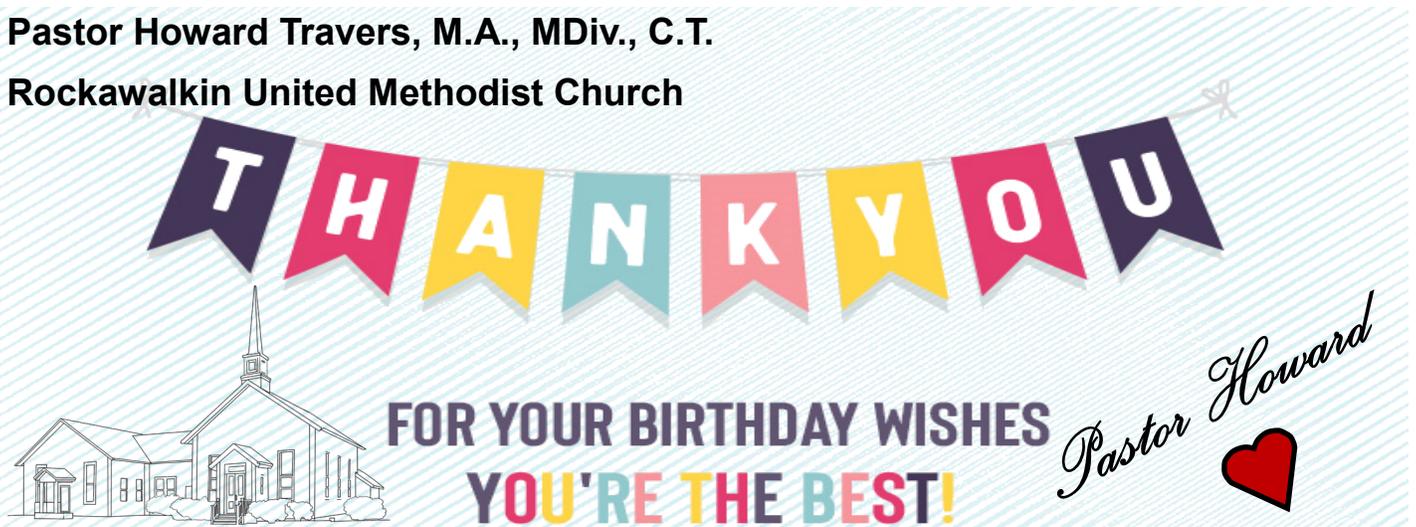
The community and the world around us is hurting. We can meet them where they are. We have the capability, the technology, and the resources. Let us bring to life those dreams of ministry that have laid dormant for many years. Now is the best time to think "outside the church building box" ... to dream ... and to dream big! And while the church presently "HAS left the building" let us NOT leave a once-in-a-church lifetime opportunity behind.

In His service,

Pastor Howard

Pastor Howard Travers, M.A., MDiv., C.T.

Rockawalkin United Methodist Church





Mrs. Ethel Guy's "Extra Mile for Christ" Campaign

Mrs. Ethel Guy

She began her "Extra-Mile for Christ" Campaign in 1970. Having served several years in many official Church positions, Ethel was keenly aware of the Church's on-going financial needs and of the many Church projects that were floundering simply for lack of funding. Her recognition of this, coupled with inspiration from Christ's "Parable of The Talents," prompted Ethel to approach Church parishioners and the community to make specific requests of them. Ethel asked individuals to set aside a portion of their crops, raise a few more chickens, or reserve a special portion of their income (from their vocation) and give it to the Church as recognition of their dependence upon God and thankfulness for His many blessings in their life.

Ethel's vision quickly took shape. Each spring, participants received \$1 from the Church along with a handwritten note from Ethel Guy requesting that they increase that amount. With God's help, congregants returned the "talent" along with their financial increase to the Church each harvest season near the time of Thanksgiving.

Since 1970, the "Extra-Mile for Christ" Campaign begun by Mrs. Ethel Guy has raised literally thousands of dollars to support the ministry and mission of our Church. From selling baked goods, to crafts, to writing poems, to making pepper relish, to providing services for donations, God has utilized the talents of members and friends over the years to provide a substantial increase to the Church in funding its on-going needs and ministry efforts. We thank God for Mrs. Ethel Guy and her obedience to God in helping provide for the work of Rockawalkin United Methodist Church through the "Extra-Mile for Christ" Campaign. (continued ...)

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This year, because of COVID-19 restrictions, we are physically unable to pass a \$1 bill along to you. However, will you help us? Please consider how God might use you - your talents and abilities to be a financial blessing to Rockawalkin Church in its 2020 "Extra-Mile for Christ" Campaign. Added income from your vocation, hobby, special interest, investments, or tax refund can go a long way toward helping our Church this year.

On behalf of the dearly beloved memory of Mrs. Ethel Guy and this year's "Extra-Mile for Christ" Campaign organizers, thank you in advance for caring and sharing with us in going "the extra-mile" for Christ and His Church!



THE PARABLE OF THE TALENTS

From the Church Trustees

Continuing Our 20-20 Vision



Building for Rockawalkin U.M.C.'s future ...

In an effort to provide exterior accommodations for current and future church and community purposes, and in an effort to become a more visible church presence in our community, the Rockawalkin U.M.C. Trustees at the July 20, 2020, Administrative Church Council Meeting made a passionate presentation and proposal for the erection of a pavilion structure on our CrossRoads property (corner of Rockawalkin Road and Crooked Oak Lane). In response to the vision and proposal, the Church Council enthusiastically voted unanimously to advance the Trustee's plans.

The scope of this project includes the erection of a 40 x 90 x 11 pavilion on-site to accommodate Worship Services, studies, and approved church, family, and community activities / events. These include but are not limited to, Campmeeting Services, Christian concerts, retreats, festivals, weddings, funerals, baptisms, picnics, family gatherings, community yard sales / flea markets, etc. The opportunities before the Church are endless.

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Based on reputation, quality, and price of the project, Delmarva Buildings of Wyoming, Delaware, has been chosen as the pavilion contractor. The cost to provide initial construction of the pavilion is \$56,000.00 which will be funded through finances presently available to the Church. We are confident in God and you that additional costs related to optional building features, accessories, and site improvements can be successfully funded over-time through project-specific congregational giving. We trust that you will want to be an active participant in future giving towards the accessories and beautification of our Church pavilion and property and will take advantage of opportunities to do so. Presently, site plans, surveys, and permits are being secured. If all goes as planned, it is our goal to have the pavilion erected in time for dedication this Fall. More details to come.

If you have specific questions related to the pavilion, you can reach Tom Miller, Trustee Chair at 410-251-7460 or biddie1515@gmail.com or Tom Field, Administrative Church Council Chair at 410-430-4516 or tfield44@yahoo.com.

We are excited about all the possibilities that having this on-site pavilion will afford to us. Your continued prayers and partnership with us in this effort is critical as we continue advancing the Church's vision throughout the remainder of 2020 and beyond.

On-Line Giving To The Church Is Easy

- Give through Pay Pal
- Give through automatic bill pay
- Visit www.rockawalkin.com for on-line guidance

Need further on-line giving assistance?

Call Iris Shockley @ (443) 880-6419
or bookkeeper@rockawalkin.com

Planned Giving That Grows

PLANNED GIVING to Rockawalkin U.M.C. allows you to share the blessings you have received by investing in the mission of our Church and making a smart and generous financial decision.

Take a look around our Church. At every turn you see the legacies of those here today and of those who came before us. From the steeple atop the Church, to our beautiful stained-glass windows in the sanctuary, to our planned pavilion, these and countless other fixtures, features and programs were funded by members of Rockawalkin U.M.C. past and present – all contributions gladly made to ensure that their Church survived and thrived not just in their time but in future generations.

Planned giving comes in many forms, from cash to securities to other assets, but shares a common attribute: It provides stability and strength to our Church today, tomorrow and for many years to come.

Whether Rockawalkin U.M.C. benefits from your **planned giving** or not, we strongly encourage you to have a written plan — by will, trust or other mechanism — to pass along the assets that you built over a lifetime. Having such a plan ensures that you — instead of the state and probate attorneys — control how those assets are passed down. We hope that Rockawalkin U.M.C. can be part of your plan and your legacy, because **planned giving** has a tremendous, lasting impact. Your planned gift can build the endowment funds that help ensure unexpected expenditures don't chip away at ministries we value. The endowment funds also allow us the resources to financially sustain new Spirit-led ministries. You can also designate your planned gift to go to something particularly meaningful to you at Rockawalkin U.M.C. The gift can be made while you are alive and/or it can come after your death.

You should consult with your legal, tax and/or financial adviser as you begin to finalize your giving plans. A Rockawalkin Endowment Fund Committee is currently being formed to outline protocols and to assist congregants with **planned giving** commitments. We invite you to prayerfully consider how your **planned giving** might be used of God to ensure Rockawalkin U.M.C. continues its ministry for another 180-years or more.

— Now —
HIRING
COME GROW WITH US!

Executive Secretary Wanted

- Part-Time (16 hours weekly)
- Competitive Salary
- Paid Time Off
- Are you highly competent? ...
- Experienced in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Publisher? ...
- Do you have at least (7) years secretarial experience? ...
- Able to work independently without direct supervision? ...
- Detail-oriented - quality and precision-focused? ...
- People-oriented - supportive and fairness-focused? ...
- Team-oriented - cooperative and collaborative? ...
- Able to manage multiple tasks and projects efficiently?

Send cover letter and resume to:
pastorhoward@rockawalkin.com

(No phone calls, please)



ROCKAWALKIN UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

6777 Rockawalkin Road

Hebron, Maryland 21830



The Nurture Committee

by Sister Dana Travers, Nurture Committee Chair

“Good Grief”

“You keep track of all my sorrows. You have collected all my tears in your bottle. You have recorded each one in your book.”

~ Psalm 56:8 (NLT)

As you may be aware, my husband is bi-vocational. In addition to being our Pastor, he also serves full-time as a Chaplain and Bereavement Care Manager with Coastal Hospice - a position he has held since 1994. In his role, he has witnessed thousands of deaths. In addition, he has provided individual and group grief counseling to thousands of bereaved. Lately, we have had many discussions regarding the correlation between COVID-19 and grief. While the situation provokes anxiety, stress and sadness, it is also a time of collective sorrow. I have verbalized to my husband and others that we are all losing something right now.

You may also be aware that after just losing my husband’s cousin a few weeks ago on Hospice care, my twin sister, my mother-in-law, and my husband’s aunt remain on Hospice care. Therefore, issues of anticipatory grief as we face their impending deaths is a very real discussion in our home right now. Our church family has been super supportive of us on this journey. Your words of hope and encouragement together with your prayers have meant everything to us and have helped to sustain us in these difficult and challenging times. For me, I have come to accept the fact that with grief comes the acknowledgement “this is not the way my world is anymore, and I need to adapt.”

I know many people who are reckoning with individual losses - illness and death and loss of employment because of economic upheaval. However, even people who have not lost anything so concrete as a job or a loved one as a result of COVID-19 are affected. This crisis has destabilized us as a nation in many ways. As COVID-19 has evolved, people have had to confront a series of losses: The loss of a sense of safety, of social connections and personal freedoms, of jobs and financial security. (Continues on next page)

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Going forward, people will experience new losses we cannot yet predict. We are talking about grieving a living loss - one that keeps going and going.

COVID-19 has also invoked strong feelings of grief and loss in us as a church body. Our worship and fellowship activities will likely never return to what we experienced in the past and we need to fully acknowledge, recognize, and grieve that loss as a church. I believe it is important for us to name what we're losing, individually and collectively.

Most of us have never been through anything like this previously, but we have been through other challenging transitions. I often point to the changes and adaptations we made personally and as a nation in the shadow of those horrific events of September 11, 2001.

As my Pastor-husband assures me, it is okay to feel grief over what we are losing. When we do that, it allows us to let grief do its job, so that we can move on. I have also come to understand that those who cope well with loss usually move in and out of grief's stages of denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance.

One thing we've learned from disasters is the ongoing importance of social supports. Please keep checking in on one another and keep the support going. Though remaining socially distanced, let's continue to stay connected and nurture one another through telephone calls, text messages, social media, and other available platforms.

As I have come to learn from the example of Jesus ... This is our Garden of Gethsemane. Deep feelings of dread, grief, and loss may be sweeping over the soul of our nation and church right now. However, there is a purpose and direction in this crisis that is quite clear. We can retreat from it, or we can embrace it knowing that something far better - a resurrection to an even better life is just ahead of us! God bless you!



GREETINGS FROM UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

by Iris Shockley, U.M.W. President



Autumn Greetings!

Fall is officially here and it is so wonderful to see the beauty that God presents to us each day. The leaves turning their rich oranges, dark reds and luscious yellows, the beautiful sunsets, and the cool crisp air are a constant reminder that He is close to us always and wants to make our world pleasing to us.

Hopefully more of you can join us for the October meeting on the 13th at 1:30 p.m. in the Community Hall. Our program will be about the World Thank Offering. We usually pass out the boxes in February to fill with our change and return in October, but since we did not meet, please consider making a donation to send for this wonderful mission.

A collage of various photographs showing people engaged in community service, religious activities, and social gatherings, surrounding the central text.

**PURPOSE OF
UNITED METHODIST WOMEN**

The organized unit of United Methodist Women shall be a community of women whose purpose is to know God and to experience freedom as whole persons through Jesus Christ; to develop a creative, supportive fellowship; and to expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church.



CHARGE CONFERENCE

JUST A REMINDER!

*Charge conference is **Wednesday November 11th at 6:30 p.m.** at
Rockawalkin United Methodist Church.*

*Please have documents submitted to Pastor Howard by **October 25th.***

Praise Report??

Prayer Need??

Prayer Concern??

Call / Email:

(410) 742-6975

office@rockawalkin.com



Administrative Council Meeting

Monday, October 19th at 7:30 p.m.

Rockawalkin Community Hall



CrossRoads Community Connections

“Connecting our Community to Christ”

*Exciting news! We are having a “Movie Night” on **Friday, Oct. 23rd at 7:00 p.m.** (rain date Saturday, 10/24). Our feature film will be “I Still Believe.” It is the true story of Christian artist, Jeremy Camp’s journey of love, loss, and hope. Bring your chair or blanket and your favorite beverage (non-alcoholic of course). We’ll provide pre-bagged popcorn! Our social distancing guidelines will be in effect. More information to come. Please mark your calendars for this fun night of fellowship!*

We are so blessed to have our Crossroads property. It has been such an important part of maintaining our congregational connection during this unprecedented time!! Worship is vital to any church especially ours. Being together even though we have to social distance has been an amazing blessing! We need that time of togetherness in corporate worship! The Worship Team, the Crossroads Team and Pastor Howard have worked hard to maintain some semblance of normalcy during this time. A huge “Thank You” to Connor Hughes and Ed Duvall for their commitment and hard work to bring us together through our Facebook Livestream each Sunday! We appreciate each of you who have been faithful in attending our CrossRoads services also! Our plan is to offer outdoor worship through the end of October; weather permitting.

*We will send out emails or you can check our CrossRoads Community Connections Facebook page or the Rockawalkin Facebook page if we decide to cancel the CrossRoads service. To keep everyone safe we expect everyone to continue to respect and comply with the guidelines. As always we appreciate your prayers and your support of this vital ministry! ~ **Delores DeVage, CrossRoads Ministry Director***

CrossRoads Community Connections

CrossRoads Schedule

Sundays @ 10:00 a.m. (weather permitting)

Open-Air Service Guidelines

- *Bring your own chair*
- *Ushers will direct you where to sit*
- *Immediate family members (husband, wife, children of the same household) may sit together as a family*
- *Masks are optional*
- *No physical contact*
- *No congregating in groups before / after the service*
- *6-Foot social distancing must be observed at ALL times*
- *No food / drinks will be available (you may bring your own)*

Drive-In Service Guidelines

For those who may feel safer inside your vehicle, drive-in parking is available. However, space is limited.

- *Parking attendants will direct you to the drive-in area*
- *Car engines MUST be turned off*





Missions-Minded

by Debbie Hughes, Missions Director

School is now in session and although being conducted from home, I contacted Pemberton Elementary School this past week and asked what their school supply needs would be because of COVID-19. They are hoping to be back to school by the third term (January) if not sooner. When they do start back, we will again be “Packing a Backpack” with school supplies. Mission Outreach will be supplying the backpacks for you to put your purchased school supplies. These supplies are for elementary age children so the teachers like to use the composition books instead of the spiral notebooks. Notebook paper should be wide-lined and not college-lined. I would say now is the time to purchase these supplies since they are on sale now. You can either hold onto them or you can drop them off to the church and put them in the counting room beside the office. I will have a container marked so you will know where to put any supplies you purchase.

I was able to drop off our hygiene items to HALO and the Christian Shelter. We donated 703 items. We were also able to take bath towels, wash clothes and laundry detergent to the Christian Shelter. I know a lot of us have not been traveling much these days so we have not been getting a lot of the hotel size of shampoo, conditioner and lotions so if you are able to drop off any type of hygiene item such as tooth paste, tooth brushes, shampoo, feminine products etc. it would be greatly appreciated. You can also put them in the counting room. The shelters are in great need of these items.

As always, thanks for all of your support!



Missions-Minded

by Sue Lobdell, Operation Christmas Child Coordinator



Samaritan's Purse collects Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes filled with toys and other fun items and delivers them to children in need around the world in partnership with local churches. Each box, prayerfully and uniquely packed by churches or groups like ours, is an opportunity for the Gospel to transform the life of a child, a family, and a community. Many boys and girls also participate in "The Greatest Journey," a 12-lesson follow-up discipleship course, where they learn to follow Christ and share Him with others. We at Rockawalkin U.M.C. will again be participating in this program. As in the past, the collection and dedication of the boxes won't be until November giving us plenty of time to consider what to include in our boxes. When I get the boxes and literature for this year, I will let everyone know through emails and here in our Newsletter. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call me or the Church Office.

P.S.: School Supplies are on sale now-items to be considered for the older children's boxes!

RENTAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM



YOU MAY QUALIFY IF:

- You are in danger of losing your rental housing because of a reduction in employment hours, or job loss directly related to COVID-19
- If your household income is at or below 80% of the area median income
- You live in Wicomico County

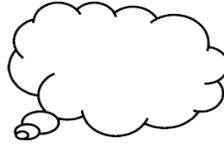
YOU WILL NOT QUALIFY IF:

- You reside within the Salisbury City Limits
- You reside in public housing, Low Income Housing, Tax Credit funded housing, or other state financially assisted housing or have already received rental assistance from another source
- If you were behind in your rent prior to March 16, 2020
- If your household received an eviction notice prior to March 16, 2020

Learn more and apply online:
www.wicomicohabitat.org/get-housing-help

908 W. Isabella Street Salisbury, MD 21801 ● 410-546-1551

Thought for the Month



by Chuck Hughes

Sometimes God lets you hit rock bottom so that you will discover that He is the rock at the bottom. - Dr. Tony Evans

Most of us are intellectually aware that 'God is there' as we travel this life. However, until that life falls apart, we may never truly comprehend His deep love for us and the 'rock' of His grace. God can use every circumstance in our lives to help us deepen our relationship with Him. The above truth, stated so well by Dr. Tony Evans, reminds us of His faithfulness.

The LORD is my Rock, my Fortress and my Deliverer; my God is my Rock, in whom I take refuge, my Shield and the Horn of my Salvation, my stronghold.

Psalm 18:2 NIV

Faith

Expectation is the breeding ground for a miracle!

Hope

Worship Service Readers

Sunday, October 4 - Robert Lobdell

Sunday, October 11 - Debbie Hughes

Sunday, October 18 - Helen Chamblin

Sunday, October 25 - Andrew Guido

Is God calling you to serve as a Worship Service Reader?

Contact Joanne Kramer, Church Secretary

Celebrating Birth!

- October 02 - Jo Anne Field
- October 02 - John Zimmerman
- October 11 - Phil Lord
- October 12 - Jean Pierce
- October 21 - Jerry Briele
- October 29 - Rada Renshaw



Why not brighten someone's day? Send them a birthday card and wish them well. What a wonderful ministry of caring ... even while remaining socially-distanced!

HELP WANTED

FB Livestreamers!
Call Connor @ 443-880-0424
hugg_hees@cbha.biz

MEMBERSHIP SUNDAY



Sunday, Oct. 18 at 10:00 a.m.
**Interested in Church
membership?**
**Call the Church Office
for details**



Articles for the November Newsletter are due no later than **Sunday, October 25!** Thank you for your help in assisting us in meeting our publication deadlines!