

**Sermon Given On January 3, 2009**  
**Beginning of New Hope UMC's 200 Anniversary Year**  
**Pastor Bill Masciangelo**



*Revelation 3:20*

***Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.***

People are always worried about their age and how they look...but what about churches? As we look back over the past 200 years of ministry to the New Hope Community...As we look at the wonderful people who have served so faithfully down through the decades...As we look at the spiritual victories that have been won around this altar...As we look at the lives that have been changed...As we look at the marriages that have been saved...As we look at the bad habits that have been broken by the power of Christ...As we look at the sacrifice of those Christians in the early days of our church...We can only stand and sing: ***“To God be the Glory...Great Things He Has Done”***.

**Our text this morning doesn't say it...**But the truth is certainly real as it relates to our church. *“I was here. I stood at the door and knocked...and there were those who answered the door...and I came into their hearts”*.

**As we look at this congregation...**as we look at the people and the lives that have been impacted by this church...I trust that we can see the Hand of God writing...***“I was here”...I knocked on the door of people's hearts...and they opened the door of their hearts and let me come in” I came...I touched lives...I forgave sin...I healed families...I was here”...Thank you Father God!***

By the same token...I know our text doesn't say it...but I am convinced that it is true nonetheless...**When we look to the future**, we hear God saying: ***I will be here. I will stand at the door and knock...and there will be those who will answer the door...and let me come in”***.

As New Hope United Methodist Church continues to worship God Almighty each Sunday...As we continue to impact the lives of people in this community for the next 200 years we realize that God will be here: ***Always faithful...Always knocking...Always searching for that man, woman, boy or girl...who will open the door to His knock.***

But more important than God's blessings in the past...and more important than God's provisions in the future...God would have us read the scripture text as it is written. **God is here today!**

It's fun to look back on what God has done in the past...and we will do that in the coming year. **But are you listening to the voice of the Lord today?** It's exciting to start looking ahead and get a glimpse of what God will do in the future. We are doing exciting things and we can anticipate that our ministries and service to the community of New Hope will continue to grow as we continue to grow.

But, even though God was once here in the past...and even though God will be here in the future...the most important thing is what God is doing right now. I am convinced that He is knocking on someone's heart's door right now. What a great time to come back to Christ today. Now!

### **Conclusion**

It's exciting to be here...It's exciting to remember our past and it is exciting to look forward...In a moment we will enjoy a wonderful meal together; then ring the historic church bell. But, if that is all that this day means...Then we have missed something...Because we must let the Lord speak to us...And I believe He is speaking to some people here today...people who have lost their fire for the Lord...and they have grown lukewarm.

### **Closing**

I invite you to bow your heads...close your eyes. Is the Lord knocking at your heart's door today? He wants to restore the joy you once had when you used to be on fire for Him. All you have to do is **open the door and let Him come in**. What better way for New Hope and this community to embark upon the next 200 years of ministry than for revival to break out right here, this year. **Join us as we celebrate.**