

"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world." (Matt. 5:13-14)

We often find ourselves in spiritual droughts: a dry season, a rut, or a dark night of the soul. Everyone has times when the Christian life feels stagnant, when it seems that nothing is happening spiritually, and – despite our best knowledge of God's love for us – it may feel like nothing will be happening forever. It feels like our prayers will never feel holy again, like a service will never be uplifting again, and like Scripture will never touch our hearts again. It feels like God went on vacation, and, for some strange reason, it's hard to believe He's coming back.

Spiritual droughts often carry a sense of guilt or inadequacy: physical droughts have external causes beyond our control, but spiritual droughts happen within our hearts, and, presumably, we are their cause. We might tell ourselves something to the effect of "If I were a better Christian, this wouldn't be happening; if I loved God more, I would feel differently; I must be worse at this following Jesus thing than everyone else, because I seem to be the only one who feels this way." When the drought persists, we get harsh with ourselves; we blame ourselves and only ourselves; we assume that we're the only ones, the only real sinners. We conclude something is uniquely wrong with us: "Sure, the church is for sinners, but I must be extra-broken somehow: I hear nothing; I feel nothing; and that must mean I am nothing." Jesus disagrees.

He tells his followers that they are "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world." These words are from the Sermon on the Mount, and they were spoken to the crowds and Jesus' disciples, the same disciples who would abandon Jesus at the crucifixion. Peter, despite his portrayal in stained glass windows with a halo and keys to the kingdom, was just as broken as the rest of us. One can only imagine the kind of spiritual drought he was in when he denied Jesus three times (Lk. 22:54-62). When we think about the flaws of even Jesus' closest disciples, we often miss the weight of Jesus' words. He does not say we are supposed to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. Rather, he says "You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world."

Our identity as Christians is not rooted in how we feel at any given moment; Jesus determines who we are, and his words do not change with our mood. When we feel like nothing, Jesus reminds us that we are salt and light, that we are beloved children of God, and participants in the redeeming work of His kingdom – and that has nothing to do with how "well" we're doing. Peter probably felt like the worst follower of Jesus in the world at that moment, and perhaps he was, but his drought did not define him; Jesus did. Peter was still the rock that Jesus would use to build His church, and if Peter had spiritual droughts, it should be abundantly clear to us that our spiritual droughts are completely normal. Why is one surprised to find that a relationship with an infinite, perfect God is complex, with ups and downs, just like every other relationship in one's life? Find comfort in Peter's example: Jesus did not give up on him, and he certainly isn't giving up on you. Even if the drought is long, even if you did cause it, even if you cause seven, even if you cause seventy times seven. Jesus' love is so much greater than all of it. And besides, droughts are, by definition, temporary.

~Douglas Bunting, Duke Intern.

NEW AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Looking Ahead to Sunday Worship

Scripture for Sunday: Romans 8:12-25

Sermon Title: *In-Between Time*

As we look ahead to Sunday, I encourage you to read the scripture ahead of time as part of your devotional time and preparation for Sunday. One passage of scripture can easily take us in many directions. Use the sermon title to help guide your reflections. Spend time in Lectio Divina with the scripture as part of your daily devotions. There are lots of videos on YouTube on how to participate in Lectio Divina. Here is a meditative video that is instructive to be a resource to you –

Meditative How To - Lectio Divina

Lake Junaluska Music and Worship Arts Week 2026

Several weeks ago, a lively group of children, youth and adults traveled to the mountains of western NC for a week of music, worship and fellowship. There were wonderful worship services with beautiful music, choir rehearsals, swimming, walks around the lake, a youth talent show and more. One of our own youth even participated in the talent show and solved a rubics cube in less than 2 minutes! Of course the kids wanted to have their own talent show when we got home that night. (They had some real class acts!)

We stayed in an large, older home overlooking the lake and lived together as a big family of 16 learning and growing in faith.

Everyone returned home excited, exhausted (adults), and filled with the spirit and a song in their heart.

Thank you, church family, for your unending encouragement and financial support of the music ministry and our children. What an investment in their spiritual (and musical) future!

The Hallelujah Kids and

Leigh McFalls, Lake J Ringmaster (name given to me by the kids)

Youth Update -- Breakaway

I am so thankful for the opportunity to attend Breakaway again this year. Breakaway is a week-long camp for youth in the North Carolina Conference where you spend intentional time in worship and small growth groups. This year was my second year attending and it was just as impactful as last year. Our youth group couldn't attend without the support of our church family. Last year, I met a person who would become my best friend in growth groups. We have laughed together and cried together many times since then. The worship at Breakaway is amazing and youth can take part in the worship services. It was a true joy to watch my brother, Michael, play the drums during worship. Breakaway 2026 helped our Walnut Grove youth who attended grow closer together as well. I can't believe next year will be my last Breakaway. I can't wait to see what God has in store for the NC Conference Youth. Thank you to everyone who helps make these life-changing opportunities available to our youth. We appreciate our Walnut Grove village!

In Christian Love,

Mary Emma Roberts

Potluck Breakfast With Our Intern – August 2nd

Our summer intern, Douglas, will conclude his time with us on Sunday, August 9. We are grateful for his ministry this summer, and we invite you to join us as he brings the morning message on his final Sunday.

Please plan to join us for a special Potluck Breakfast honoring Douglas on Sunday, August 2 at

8:30am. This will be a wonderful opportunity to enjoy fellowship together and personally thank Douglas for his time with our church. We hope everyone can come and help us make this a memorable send-off as we wish him God's blessings in the future. This event is open to everyone – we would love for you to come and be part of this special gathering.

What to Bring:

A breakfast item to share

A card for Douglas

Sunday Night Gatherings

It will be time to start back Sunday night fall activities before you know it! I created a survey to help us plan accordingly. Please take a few minutes to fill it out. If you have questions or comments, let me know! -Pastor Laura

Survey for Sunday Night Bible Study

OCIM Update

OCIM needs for this week are toilet paper, toothbrushes, bars of soap, toothpaste, and deodorant.

A total of 1630 pounds has been delivered by Walnut Grove since January! Thank you for all the contributions to support OCIM and our community.

Youth Yard Sale – July 24-25

We are accepting donations from July 19th after church through July 23rd for our youth yard sale! Drop-off location is the church fellowship hall during office hours of Monday through Thursday 9:00am to 1:00pm. All unsold donations will be taken to charity unless picked up by 12:00pm on Saturday, July 25th. The yard sale is from 8am to 11am on Friday, July 24th and Saturday July 25th.

Trustees Update

Dear Friends,

We are grateful for the many ways we work together to keep our church family safe. From our Safe Sanctuaries policy to other security measures, we give thanks for the measures in place to keep our church campus safe. As part of our ongoing commitment, we want to share an important update from our trustees.

Recently, our church cleaners encountered an individual running down the stairs and exiting through the front entrance one morning. In addition, staff members have occasionally found doors left unlocked and lights left on after the building had been secured by trustees or staff. While no one was harmed, these incidents remind us of the importance of taking reasonable precautions to protect our congregation and our church campus.

In response, our trustees approved the installation of security cameras throughout our campus. A camera is also located near the pastor's office, with safeguards in place to protect privacy during pastoral conversations. Please know that these cameras do not record audio, preserving the confidentiality of conversations. Their sole purpose is to enhance the security of our church buildings and provide a safer environment for everyone who worships, serves, and gathers here.

We are grateful for the trustees' ongoing leadership and for our shared commitment to making Walnut Grove United Methodist Church a safe, welcoming, and caring place for all.

Peace be with you,
~Pastor Laura

Save The Date – Charge Conference -- Sunday, October 11!

Charge Conference is Sunday, October 11th at 3:00pm. Walnut Grove UMC will be hosting this year. This is open to all members of the church! Please join us as we continue to grow together in Christ!

Summer Arts Camp For Kids

A poster for Summer Arts Camp For Kids. The background is light pink. The text "SUMMER ARTS CAMP" is written in large, bold, black, hand-drawn letters. To the left of "SUMMER" is a hand holding a red and blue glue stick. To the right of "ARTS" is a hand holding a paintbrush with red paint. Below "CAMP" is a hand holding a red pencil. To the right of "CAMP" is a red star. Below the star is a QR code. To the right of the QR code is the text "K-5TH GRADE" and "\$20 PER CHILD" in red, hand-drawn letters. In the top right corner, the text "Walnut Grove UMC" is written in black, followed by "July 27-30th" and "9am - 12pm" in black. At the bottom, the text "Scan to register or email office@walnutgroveumc.org" is written in black.

Walnut Grove UMC
July 27-30th
9am - 12pm

**SUMMER
ARTS
CAMP**

K-5TH
GRADE
\$20 PER CHILD

Scan to register or email office@walnutgroveumc.org

A Peals For Peace

Starting Monday, July 6, at 6PM, our church bells will ring for 15 minutes in solidarity with other places of faith throughout the country with a movement in solidarity with the NC Council of Churches to share a message of peace for our world. This message of peace speaks to the need for peace in our world, in our community and state, in our homes, and in our lives. Each first Monday of the month at 6 PM until September will be a time to pause, listen, and pray. Then starting Monday, September 7, bells will ring weekly on Monday evenings until November 2nd. In a world often scarred by violence, division, and suffering, God calls us to be quick to listen and slow to speak (James 1:19). May God bring healing through this A Peals for Peace.



Tithes and Offerings

We now have five ways to give to our ministries. If you would like your offering to be allocated towards a specific ministry, please indicate it in the memo of your check or you will be prompted on the website.

1. Give during our weekly Worship Services.
2. Mail in a check to 7215 Walnut Grove Church Road, Hurdle Mills, NC 27541.
3. Use our church [website](#). Click **GIVE** in the upper right corner.
4. Use our "My Church" mobile app. Click GIVE in the lower right corner.
5. Use our Vanco QR Code, which you can find on the back of the Sunday bulletins or right here in the weekly *In A Nutshell*.

Vanco QR Code

As we continually adapt to the gift of technology, Walnut Grove now has a Vanco QR code provided on the back of the bulletin and in the Nutshell for online giving. Simply hold your phone or tablet's camera over the code for the link to Vanco. Your generosity helps us continue serving Christ and reaching out to our community in mission and faithful witness.



JOYS & CONCERNS

Prayer List

- Pat Beck, recovering from surgery. She is a member of our church family.
- Carol Gerbracht, recovering from surgery. She is a member of our church family.
- Herbert Cates, recovering from car accident and other health concerns. He is a member of our church family.
- JoAnn Cates with health issues. She is a member of our church family.
- Rev. Meg Hoffman, battling cancer. She's the director of Seeds of Faith at Camp Chestnut Ridge.
- John Hougom from Hurdle Mills, who is being treated for lung cancer. John is the brother of Sonja Tilley and brother-in-law of Wesley Tilley.
- Rev. Mike Sykes and Pat Sykes with health concerns
- Kathy Matthews, recovering from a fall. She is a friend of Kim McColman.
- Gene Parker who has ongoing health concerns and was recently discharged from the hospital. His wife, Kay Parker, is a member of WGIMC.
- Jaxson Bates injured in a traffic accident. He is a friend of Mary Emma Roberts.
- Scott Moore, diagnosed with leukemia. He is the brother-in-law of Emma Beckham.
- Merrill Messick, who is Beverly Huey's father and Mary Dietz, her aunt.
- Sam Woods, who is facing health issues.
- Wayne Dewberry, who is facing surgery after a recent fall.
- Scott Hackler with cancer diagnosis. He is a friend of Jolinda Swiggett.
- Lynwood Lovitte, who is a member of our church family.
- Jessy Privette from Wendell has been diagnosed with cancer. Jesse is the girlfriend of Jeffrey James, who is the son of Anita James and brother of Michael James.
- Rick Johnson with health issues. He is friends with Judy Butler and many other church members.
- David Leonard having complications from surgery. He is the dad of a friend of Faith Parker.
- Leo Brooks Populorum (7 Months old), from Pittsboro, has very serious health issues. Leo is the grandson of John and Judy Guibert who are friends of Beverly Huey.
- Ben Lloyd, Cheryl Humphrey's father, with serious health issues.
- Gilbert Lee in Prince George, VA, who recently had surgery for cancer. He is Richard Lee's father
- Liz Matthews, friend of Katie Whitaker
- Kathy Kimrey with health concerns. She is the sister-in-law of Lorraine Hines and Pam Kimrey.

Prayer is powerful and we love praying for one another! If you have a request on the prayer list, we would be grateful for any updates needed. This helps us know how to continue praying and when requests may be removed or celebrated. Please let us know how we can best pray for you and your loved ones.

Send A Card

Linwood and Linda Lovitte (Celebrating their 73rd Anniversary on July 30th), 7715 Tilley Road, Hurdle Mills 27541

Quilt

Jathniel Ashe from Cherokee, North Carolina who is having health issues. Quilt requested by Lorraine Parker.

(The prayer quilt will be at the front of the sanctuary on Sunday. You're invited to tie a knot and say a prayer before or after the service.)

From The Mailbox

Members of the Prayers & Squares Ministry,

I am truly blessed by the gift of the lovely prayer quilt you made for me. I can feel the prayers you sewed into it. I feel your love and God's love as I wrap myself in it. Thank you, thank you, thank you,

Ann Timmons

Birthdays

Sunday 7/19 – Hannah Gibbs, Kayla Burton

Monday 7/20 – Kailey Latta

Wednesday 7/22 – Jessica Young, Frank Simmons, Bryan Guy, Charles Merritt

Thursday 7/23 – Lorraine Parker, Tommy Hall, Benny McFalls

Friday 7/24 – Donnie Crabtree, Jesse Whitaker

Saturday 7/25 – Ashley Ford, Tony Larry Rigsbee, Jr.

If your birthday is incorrect or missing, please contact Kim at the church office at 919-732-5722 or by email at office@walnutgroveumc.org so we can update our records.

STAYING CONNECTED

[WG YouTube](#)

[WG Facebook](#)

[Website](#)

Serving in Worship

July 19th

Acolytes: Corbin Smith/Isaac Conway

Greeters: Tyler & Stephanie Smith

Ushers: Jimmy & Brenda Berry

Scripture: Scott Humphrey

Nursery: Judy Butler/Courtney Humphrey

Trustee Open/Close: Patty Maseth

Financial Rep: Lou Rutledge

July 26th

Acolytes: Anna Robinson/Magnus Kemnitz

Greeters: Dale Smith/Stacey Spake

Ushers: Jenny Blalock/Margaret Anne Dow

Scripture: Erica Nading

Nursery: Lorraine Hines/Grace Dunlap

Trustee Open/Close: Daniel Johnson

Financial Rep: Judy Butler

Mowing Schedule

July 18 - Jimmy Berry

July 25 - Bruce Richardson

August 8 - Mike Parker

August 22 - Barry Walker

August 1- Todd Harris

August 15 - Clay Parker

August 29 - Phil Hines

NOTE: If you're unable to serve in your role listed above, please find someone to serve in your place and notify Kim of the change. This will allow us to have an updated listing to publish each week.

Upcoming Events

Sunday, July 19

9:30am Sunday School

10:30am Worship Service

10:45am Children's Church

2:00pm Finance Committee meeting

3:00pm SPRC meeting

Mon-Fri, July 20-24

Local Missions Week for Youth

Wednesday, July 22

6:30pm Worship Band

7:00pm Worship Choir

Thursday, July 23

6:30pm Harvest Festival meeting

Fri-Sat., July 24-25

Youth Yard Sale

Sunday, July 26

9:30am Sunday School

10:30am Worship Service

10:45am Children's Church

Mon-Thurs, July 27-30

9am-12pm Summer Arts Camp for Kids

Wednesday, July 29

6:30pm Worship Band

7:00pm Worship Choir

Fri-Sat., July 31-Aug 1

Walnut Grove Crafters

See You Sunday!!