

## Learning Forgiveness

There are few things as critical to our faith journey as learning forgiveness. We accept forgiveness from God and are to forgive each other in kind. In the Lord's Prayer and the verses immediately following Jesus makes this point (and puts some teeth into it, *Matt. 6:9-15*). But to forgive grave offenses and hurts can be a long journey indeed.

I work for *Zoe Empowers* which empowers orphaned children and vulnerable youth over a three-year program throughout Africa and India. The ways in which these once-vulnerable young people receive the good news of the Gospel and then put it into action amazes me. In this program the young people are gathered together into mutually supportive peer groups of about 25 youth-led families in each group. In Rwanda we had a group who had been particularly abused by members of their community when they were vulnerable. They would beg for food or beg for work to survive each day. Some neighbors took advantage of them and would have them do hard labor on empty stomachs and then refuse to pay them, knowing no one would listen to their complaints. Others were physically abused in shameful ways.

Once these young people joined the Zoe program life transformed. They started businesses through which they could afford to feed themselves, repair houses, get health care, re-enroll their siblings in school, and they learned about their human rights. In the second year of Zoe's program, in addition to their individual businesses, they also had a group income generating project of a goat herd. It turns out that the goats liked each other and so they ended up with more goats than they were expecting. Because goats are such a valuable resource, this was a big boon to the group. These young people were trying to decide what to do with their abundance while they were also wrestling with the concept of Christian forgiveness—for they had much to forgive.

The group came to a consensus on what to do. They selected twelve families from their Village who had been particularly abusive to them when they were most vulnerable, and they presented each with a goat as a symbol of Christian reconciliation!

Whenever I am struggling to forgive someone in my own life, I consider what this group of African orphans taught me about forgiveness, and I strive to put my faith into action in similar ways.

By Gaston Warner,  
[gaston.warner@zoeempowers.org](mailto:gaston.warner@zoeempowers.org)

## **NEW AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

### **Mary Martha Busy Ladies**

Mary Martha Busy Ladies will meet at the church on **Thursday, December 14, 2023** at 11:00 a.m. We will leave for The Homestead Steakhouse by 11:30 a.m. This is our Christmas luncheon. Please RSVP to Sue (919-819-0344) or Pat (984-358-2167) by Friday, December 8th. We hope you can join us!

### **Holiday Treats for Pathways Elementary Teachers and Staff**

A group of parents, grandparents, and friends are providing treats for the teachers and staff of Pathways Elementary on December 15th. This includes store-bought cookies (with the nutrition label) and individually wrapped candy. If you would like to contribute, please bring the above items to the Fellowship Hall by Sunday, December 10th, and place them in the container labeled "Holiday Treats For Pathways Teachers and Staff". For more information, contact Ashley James at (919) 618-7524.

### **Sharing Christmas Cheer**

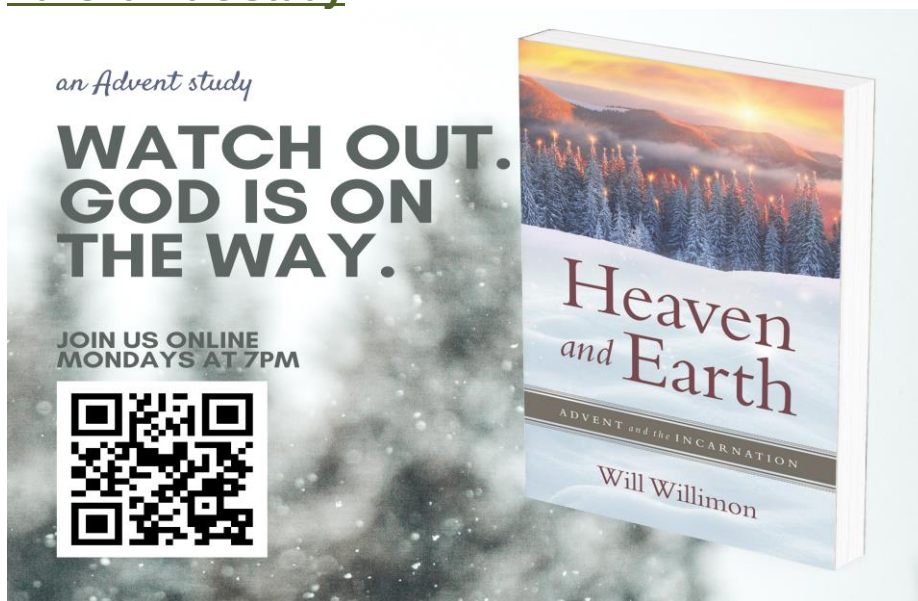
We have a request from the chaplain at Orange Correctional Center as we partner with sister Orange Cooperative Parish churches to help 150 inmates receive a small gift for Christmas. On Sundays you can drop off items in a designated box at the back of the sanctuary. Please note the antiperspirant cannot be the gel variety. Thanks for helping share Christmas joy to those in our incarcerated community.

### **Trip to the Billy Graham Library and "The Real Christmas Story"**

#### **Saturday, December 16, 2023**

Jean Mangum reports that she received a letter stating the bus will be at Walnut Grove UMC at 8:30am and will depart at 9:00am. After a fun-filled day the bus will be returning around 10:00pm.

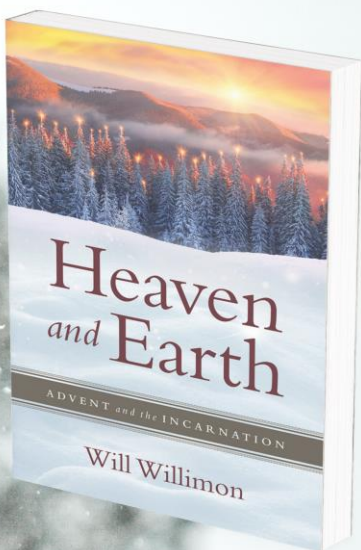

### **Advent Bible Study**



an Advent study

**WATCH OUT.  
GOD IS ON  
THE WAY.**

JOIN US ONLINE  
MONDAYS AT 7PM



## **Tithes and Offerings**

We have four 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 online giving app "Vanco Mobile".

## **Budget News as of November 30, 2023**

Year to Date Income - \$ 202,114.91

Year to Date Expenses - \$ 202,546.01

Difference - \$ 431.10

Matthew 25:35 Fund Balance: \$ 9,649.77

Harvest Festival Fund Balance: \$ 93,005.22 (Note: This figure does not include all of the Harvest Festival expenses that have yet to be paid. It also does not include repairs to the parsonage from the storm damage that we have already received payment from the insurance claim to cover.)

## **JOYS & CONCERNS**

### **Prayer List**

- Linwood and Linda Lovitte in the passing of Linwood's brother (C.G.)
- Family of Ann Davis (sister-in-law of Donnie Davis)
- Betty Sue Hyder (cancer treatments), Margaret Williams' sister and Sharyn Gates' aunt
- Beth Roberts, who was recently in a bad car accident. She is the daughter of Billie Roberts
- Billy Addison from Erwin, NC who has been diagnosed with mouth cancer. Cheryl Humphrey is asking for prayers for Billy.
- Pat Sykes
- Debbie Haywood (cancer treatments), friend of Ann and Bruce Richardson.
- Dana Kimrey. He is the brother of Lorraine Hines.

### **Send A Card**

Linwood and Linda Lovitte (Sympathy), 7715 Tilley Road, Hurdle Mills, NC 27541

### **Upcoming Birthdays**

Friday 12/1 – Callie White

Monday 12/4 – Gordon Christen, Kassie Kimrey Baker, Kathryn Parker, Shane Parker, Sandra Penland, Billie Roberts, Patty Maseth

Tuesday 12/5 – Phil Hines, Hunter Preston

Wednesday 12/6 – Cheryl Ray, Robin Williams

Thursday 12/7 – Adam Gates

Friday 12/8 – Darryl Clayton, Joshua Rogers

Saturday 12/9 – Lynwood Clayton, Cameron Ray, Casey Young, Gwen Hall-DiFabio

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](mailto:office@walnutgroveumc.org) so we can update our records.

## STAYING CONNECTED

## WG YouTube

## WG Facebook

## Website!

**Sign UpHere! For Online Sign-Up**

## Serving in Worship

## December 3rd

Acolytes: Isaac Conway/Gracie Hall

Greeters: Patty Maseth/Mary Emma Roberts

Ushers: Lorraine & Phil Hines

Nursery: Judy Parker/Grace Dunlap

Trustee Open/Close: Rev. Laura Dunlap

Communion Servers: Cheryl & Scott Humphrey

## December 10th

Acolytes: Wyatt James/Eleanor Whitaker

Greeters: Faith Parker/Dale Smithson

Ushers: Stephanie & Tyler Smith

Nursery: Cheryl L Parker/Cathy Boling

Scripture: Brenda Berry

Trustee Open/Close: Johnny Clayton

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

## Upcoming Happenings

Friday-Saturday, Dec 1-2   Walnut Grove Crafters

Saturday, December 2      9:00am Decorate Church for Advent – All welcome

Sunday, December 3      9:30am Sunday School  
10:30am Worship Service (Hanging of the Greens)  
4:30pm Christmas Worship Choir

Wednesday, December 6    6:30pm Worship Band  
7:00pm Worship Choir

Sunday, December 10

- 9:30am Sunday School
- 10:30am Worship Service
- 10:45am Children's Church
- 3:00 – 7:00pm Christmas at Camp Chestnut Ridge
- 4:30pm Christmas Worship Choir

Wednesday, December 13 7:00pm Worship Choir

Thursday, December 14 **CORRECTION** - 11:00am Mary Martha Busy Ladies

Friday, December 15 Youth Winter Retreat Registration Due

Saturday, December 16 9:30am – Worship Choir dress rehearsal  
Trip to Billy Graham Library and “The Real Christmas Story”

Sunday, December 17 9:30am Sunday School  
10:30am Worship Service – Adult Christmas Program  
3:00 – 8:00pm Youth Caroling and Christmas Party  
5:30pm Hallelujah Kids play practice

Wednesday, December 20 6:30pm Worship Band  
7:00pm Worship Choir

Saturday, December 23 9:30am Hallelujah Kids dress rehearsal

Sunday, December 24 9:30am Sunday School  
10:30am Worship Service – Children’s Christmas Program  
7:00pm – Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Monday, December 25

Friday-Sat., Dec 29-30 Walnut Grove Crafters

Sunday, December 31 9:30am Sunday School  
10:30am Worship Service  
5:00 – 8:30pm New Year’s Eve at the Grove

See You Sunday!!