

I was not feeling well recently, and a clergy friend brought over dinner, homemade enchiladas, to the parsonage. I am not much of a cook, though I have great appreciation for home cooked meals. It was such an act of kindness to receive dinner on a cold dreary night when I went to bed shortly thereafter. I confess, I almost texted back, "no," when she offered. It felt like too much!

I recalled two things. I was reminded of when I moved to Walnut Grove, how people brought meals, offered to help, and were so kind in the midst of a pandemic. The kindness of this church is a gift! I think of the outpouring of love from a woman with a jar of perfume, poured out on Jesus' feet. In the gospel of John, this story often entitled, "The Anointing of Jesus," names Mary, the sister of Lazarus anointing Jesus. Matthew and Mark share that the woman poured perfume on his head; Luke and John share how she poured it on his feet. By all accounts, it was an act of extravagant hospitality. This act of love was then questioned by the disciples, yet ultimately affirmed by Jesus.

I wonder how often we offer and receive profound kindness. Maybe it is taking a warm meal to a friend or maybe it is being the one vulnerable to say, "yes," to kindness. We all need to be reminded of God's goodness. Consider the ways to act and consider being vulnerable and saying, "yes." It might be God providing to you and teaching you a valuable lesson.

I pray that you find a way, a way to show God's love to someone and a way to receive God's love. It may be the answer to a prayer. God might remind you of someone close to your heart or someone you sense God has placed into your life though you are not sure why. Let your life testify to God's goodness at work in this world, at work through a servant's heart like the lady who poured out perfume on Jesus' feet (or head). Pour out God's love too!

~Pastor Laura

NEW AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Calling All Committee Chairs in January

Friends,

We are needing to change the time of our meeting on the 28th to 4:30 to set the calendar. The SPRC will be at Camp Chestnut Ridge until 4 for a gathering and we will need some to drive back! Thanks for understanding. Mark your calendars! –Laura

Please check out opportunities to learn and grow in January in your leadership roles! Make every effort to have a meeting with your committee in January and brainstorm priorities, ideas, and commitments for the year. Please set dates for committee meetings for the 2024 year at your January meetings. We will meet together as a church to put everything on the calendar on Jan. 28th at 4:30PM, so please plan to attend this meeting along with our first covenant council meeting of the year on Monday, January 29th, at 7:00 PM.

The Church Needs YOU!

Do you have an interest in serving within the church? We would love to have you! The nursery needs volunteers to watch children during the 10:30 service, Sunday Nights Together (6:00pm when in session) and at various times during church events.

We also need volunteers during worship to greet, usher, read scripture and serve communion. To sign up or if you have questions, let the church office or Stephanie Smith know. Once signed up, Stephanie will give you a quick tutorial.

OCIM Update

I was at OCIM last week and the shelves are almost bare. There is a need for beef stew, mayonnaise, mustard, spaghetti sauce, jelly, soups and pork and beans or baked beans. They have plenty of various kinds of canned beans like green beans.

~Brenda Berry

Valentine's Dinner

You are invited to Walnut Grove's Valentine Celebration on Saturday night, February 10th. The doors open at 5:30pm and the meal starts at 6:00. The cost of the meal is by donation. The menu is grilled chicken, baked potatoes, green beans, rolls and dessert. There will be entertainment and great fellowship. We will have a friendly competition as individuals decorate their own table and guests vote on their favorite theme. Please contact Tina Walker (919-619-1971), Judy Butler (919-971-5689) or Lorraine Hines (919-619-1090) to let us know as soon as possible if you can come. We need to order food by the end of the week. We still have a few spots left if you wish to decorate a table. All proceeds go to Rise Against Hunger.

We need **YOU** to decorate a table for our

Valentine's Dinner on February 10th at 5:30pm

*Proceeds will benefit
Walnut Grove's next*

Rise
AGAINST HUNGER

HOW TO SIGN UP

*Fill out the sign up sheet in the fellowship hall or
text/call Judy Butler at 919-971-5689*

THE FINE PRINT

Each table needs a name/theme (does not have to be Valentine's Day!).
Tables need to be decorated by 3pm on Feb. 10th.
The table creator is responsible for: decorating, setup and cleanup of the table.
The table creator provides a place setting for 8 including: plates, glasses, and silverware.
Dessert plates will be provided. Off white table cloths are available.
!!!CONTEST for the favorite table!!!

Newly Forming Evangelism Team

Are you interested in evangelism? Want to reach out to others and visitors we have at church? Want to help with follow-up when we have guests and share ideas to help us to continue to grow? Please see Pastor Laura. We are hoping to form a team soon and would love for you to be a part of this new work!

2024 Mowing Schedule

We are in the deep freeze of winter at this writing, but soon Spring will arrive and the grass will begin to grow! If you are interested in signing up to mow the church yard, please contact Cheryl Humphrey at cherylhumphreydesign@gmail.com or text 919-730-9365 by 3/15/24. The cemetery and old parsonage yard are mowed professionally so this is just the areas around the church and fellowship hall. We begin the first weekend of April and mow weekly through the last weekend in October. You will need to provide your own mower, weed eater and blower, if used. Thanks for helping to keep our beloved Walnut Grove beautiful!

Sunday Nights Return in February

We are starting back Sunday nights in February after a month of planning in January. We'll meet at the same time 5:30-6:00 dinner, 6:00-7:00 Kids Krew, Bible Study, and Youth Group. Nursery will be provided during the 6-7 hour for families with preschoolers and infants. Come join in on the fun! If you can't make it every week, no worries-we're happy to have you when you are able. We'll start back Feb. 18th and go to March 17th for the winter/spring time. Make sure to add Sunday Nights Together to your calendar as we grow closer to God and grow together as a church family!

We need your help! Sign up to help lead Kids Krew (a lesson will be provided). Please click the link below if you want to help with Kids Krew: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409044FAFAD29AFFF2-46901879-kids>

Also, please consider signing up to bring food one night. Meals could be provided by families, Sunday school classes, or leadership teams. For questions about the meals, contact Lorraine Hines at 919-619-1090 or lhines0130@gmail.com. You can sign up at:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/409044FAFAD29AFFF2-sunday1>

Lake Junaluska Music and Worship Arts Week

It's never too early to make summer plans! We still have a couple of spaces left to attend this action-packed week of music and worship (even though the early bird registration deadline has passed). Children (rising 4th graders and up), youth and adults are eligible to attend. Lake Junaluska Assembly is located in the mountains of North Carolina near Waynesville. We will leave on Sunday, June 23rd and return on Friday, June 28th.

This is an annual event designed for worship leaders, musicians, pastors, and singers of all ages. We attend worship services, choir rehearsals, concerts a youth talent show and music-related classes to name a few. There are activities for children and youth including crafts, games, swimming, walks around the lake and, of course...the ice cream shop! Our group will stay in a large house overlooking the lake. If you or your child/youth is interested in attending, contact Leigh McFalls at 919-818-3317 for more information.

Prayers

We know the power of prayer in our lives and in our world. God continues to heal, perform miracles, and offer grace and mercy in unexpected ways. We give thanks for the ways the Holy Spirit moves among us. Provided below is a prayer list for the month of January. We'll have a new list each month with prayer prompts for us each to grow in our intercessory prayers and broaden our circles to those we might not consider in our daily prayers. Use this list, pass it on, and let it guide you closer to others and to God in 2024!

January Prayers

- 1st Those preparing for new beginnings.
- 2nd Those who are expecting a baby in the new year.
- 3rd Teachers returning to school.
- 4th Students returning back to school
- 5th- Bus drivers that keep children safe to and from school.
- 6th- For God to be revealed in our lives as we celebrate the gift of Jesus as the magi did years ago.
- 7th- Coaches on sports team
- 8th- Life coaches and counselors
- 9th- New friendships to be formed
- 10th- To be supportive to friends and family
- 11th - Our church family
- 12th- Our shut-ins
- 13th -Those who are sick and facing surgery
- 14th- Those who are starting new jobs
- 15th- Those returning to college/higher education
- 16th- For all those dealing with Flu, COVID, or RSV
- 17th- For our homes to be places of peace
- 18th- For those who are experiencing homelessness
- 19th- For God to be our peace in the new year
- 20th- For God to guide us in hope in the new year
- 21st- For God to open us to the possibility of angels in our midst when we are unaware
- 22nd- For safe travels for those who commute
- 23rd- For stability in the Middle East
- 24th- For refugees
- 25th- For guidance in dealing with our nation's borders
- 26th- To be good stewards of creation
- 27th- For those in prison
- 28th- For those coming out of prison
- 29th- For those in rehab
- 30th- For those coming out of rehab
- 31st- For families that struggle with someone with addiction



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".

JOYS & CONCERNS

Prayer List

- Family of Tinka Bates (who passed away Wednesday)
- Debbie Smith who recently had back surgery. She is Tyler Smith's mom
- Herring Family (Linda and husband Dortch), Dortch has been in Duke Hospital for 3 weeks with dementia while they try to find him a permanent facility to go to. Dortch is Jane Sparks' brother-in-law.
- Betty Sue Hyder (cancer treatments), Margaret Williams' sister and Sharyn Gates' aunt
- Pat Sykes
- Debbie Haywood (cancer treatments), friend of Ann and Bruce Richardson.
- Dana Kimrey. He is the brother of Lorraine Hines.

Quilt

Dortch Herring from Gibsonville, NC in the hospital with an unknown illness. He is a relative of Jim and Jane Sparks.

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

Upcoming Birthdays

Friday 1/26 – Amber S. Roberson
Saturday 1/27 – Michelle Lee, Debbie Vuolo
Sunday 1/28 – Todd Harris, Wesley Milton
Monday 1/29 – Zachary Creech, Jack DiFabio
Tuesday 1/30 – Lorraine Hines
Wednesday 1/31 – Devon Metcalf, Grey Harris, Brian Dillard
Thursday 2/1 – Carol Gerbracht, Angela Berry
Friday 2/2 – Caleb Painter, Sam Wimberly

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](#)

[Sign UpHere! For Online Sign-Up](#)

Serving in Worship

January 28th

Acolytes: Isaac Conway/Magnus Kemnitz

Greeters: Pat Beck/Jenny Blalock

Ushers: Cathy & Chris Boling

Nursery: Faith Parker/Margaret Williams

Scripture: Cheryl L. Parker

Trustee Open/Close: Jacob Blankenship

February 4th

Acolytes: Max Kemnitz/Corbin Smith

Greeters: Shirley Clayton/Grace Dunlap

Ushers: Margaret Anne Dow/Grace Dunlap

Nursery: Cheryl S Parker/Michael Roberts

Scripture: Lorraine Parker

Trustee Open/Close: Mike Roberts

Communion Servers: Cheryl & Scott Humphrey

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-Sat., Jan. 26-27	Walnut Grove Crafters
Sunday, January 28	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 10:45am Children's Church 4:30pm Calendaring session for committee chairs
Monday, January 29	7:00pm Covenant Council meeting
Wednesday, January 31	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir
Sunday, February 4	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service
Wednesday, February 7	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir
Saturday, February 10	5:30pm Valentine's Dinner

Sunday, February 11	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 10:45am Children's Church
Wednesday, February 14	11:00am Mary Martha Busy Ladies 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service Worship Choir (following Ash Wednesday Service)
Sunday, February 18	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 4:30pm Worship Choir (Easter) 5:30pm Dinner 6:00-7:00pm Kids Krew, Youth, Bible Study, Nursery
Wednesday, February 21	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir
Friday-Sat., Feb. 23-24	Walnut Grove Crafters
Sunday, February 25	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 10:45am Children's Church 4:30pm Worship Choir (Easter) 5:30pm Dinner 6:00-7:00pm Kids Krew, Youth, Bible Study, Nursery
Wednesday, February 28	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir

See You Sunday!!