

I was at a gathering last week when a pastor prayed and used several names of God. Rose of Sharon, Prince of Prince, Alpha and Omega were shared. They are titles for the one whose name is above all names. In a Sunday school class a while back at church, the teacher talked about different names of God. He asked the class which name of God meant the most to each of us. For me, I find myself coming back to Emmanuel a lot. It reminds me ministry is never meant to be done alone. I am so thankful for each of you!

There are lots of names for God. During Advent, we have probably heard a few of those names in our prayers during worship over the past few weeks. We're familiar with: *The Son of God* – John 1:34. We hear the name for Jesus being *Emmanuel* – Matthew 1:23, *Prince of Peace* – Isaiah 9:6, or *The Light of the World* – John 8:12. For Christmas Eve, we'll focus on *The Word* – John 1:1. We are reminded, as we anticipate in these final days of preparation, that God is always greater than we think. We take a posture of surprise, knowing God's love is beyond our greatest imaginations. We wait, as a way of letting go and a way of showing honor. In waiting, we experience powerlessness and for many of us it is not easy to be patient. We wait with the anticipation of God's goodness with the full knowledge of having a relationship with our Lord Jesus, our Prince of Peace, our light in the midst of darkness, the one who is to come. (*The God who Won't let Go*, 16)

Yet, we don't stay confined to knowing only one name for God. At times we may need more peace and so praying to the Prince of Peace touches our soul profoundly. At times Emmanuel is a beautiful reminder that we are never alone. Our God is a living God, Alpha and Omega, and God continues to birth redemption in our lives by God's grace we are reminded of God's unconditional love in the midst of the challenging conditions of his birth. To be open to encountering Jesus this Christmas season, we pause to consider what name of God speaks to our hearts this day. One has said God's best name, it could be contended, is "Surprise."

May God's goodness surprise you and delight you as we wait for the birth of our Lord. As we anticipate his coming and Jesus breathing his first breath in the manger, Lord, breathe your spirit anew on us. Renew a right and joyful Christmas spirit in us as we proclaim your majesty and wonder. Merry Christmas, beloved Walnut Grove family!

~Pastor Laura

NEW AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Office Closed

Please note that the church office will be closed the week of Dec. 25th – Dec. 29th. There will not be a Nutshell next week. In case of emergency, you may contact Rev. Laura Dunlap at 919-255-4160 or ldunlap@nccumc.org.

Music Ministry Update

Children's Christmas Program – December 24th

On Sunday the Hallelujah Kids will present the Christmas musical play, "Sleepover at the Stable" during the 10:30am worship service. You will get a "bird's-eye" view of the nativity story as experienced by the animals in the stable the night Jesus was born. You don't want to miss it!

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service – December 24th

We will have our annual Christmas Eve service with candle lighting and communion. There will be one service at 7:00pm. Baby Jesus (from the manger scene), who has been passed from home to home within our congregation during the last four weeks, will be returned to the manger during the service. We will receive an offering for Project AGAPE and Professors in Methodism. For more information important ministries check out this link below:

<https://districts.nccumc.org/2023/11/united-in-love-united-in-giving/>

5th Sunday **CAROL FEST** on Sunday, December 31st

On Sunday, December 31st, during the 10:30am worship service we will be singing many of your favorite Christmas carols. Please join us for this special time of worship.

New Year's Eve Party



IT'S TIME TO CELEBRATE
NEW YEAR'S EVE
2024
at Walnut Grove
DECEMBER 31, 2023
5:30 - 8PM
ALL AGES WELCOME!!!
PIZZA-SALAD-POPCORN
7215 WALNUT GROVE CHURCH RD
HURDLE MILLS, NC



RSVP
[BIT.LY/WGNYE2024](https://bit.ly/WGNYE2024)

Lay Leadership

If you are serving in a new capacity on a committee or as chair of committee, make every effort to join a session that best fits your commitment for 2024. If you have questions, please reach out to Pastor Laura. Workshops are provided by the NC Conference and will be on zoom on

January 7, 2024 @ 2:00 pm – 5:30 pm

Join us for one of six virtual workshops designed to equip you to serve in your local church. Whether you are starting a new leadership role, or have been serving in church leadership for years, we hope this model of leadership training will prepare you for your much-needed ministry. Laity and clergy in partnership with one another is the key to a church's success in making disciples. Check out the link to register:

<https://nccumc.org/leadership/event/leadership-training/>

2024 Nominations and Lay Leadership Report

See Attachment

Calling All Committee Chairs in January

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 3 PM, so please plan to attend this meeting along with our first covenant council meeting of the year on Monday, January 29th, at 7 PM.

Safe Sanctuaries Training

What is Safe Sanctuaries? Safe Sanctuaries is an overt expression in making congregations safe places where children, youth, and elders may experience the abiding love of God and fellowship within the community of faith.

Why do I need to come? - Even if you have been trained in the past, this time will be a refresher. If you haven't been, you'll want to come learn procedures and best practices we will have in place to keep our church family safe.

For Whom? If you volunteer in youth, chaperones, VBS, or plan to volunteer (this includes all activities), please make every effort to attend.

When? - Jan. 21st from 3-5 PM in the church fellowship

Our Duke pastoral intern, Lauren Birch, will be leading the session. If you have questions, please contact the church office.

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

- Judy Parker who is recovering from a pinched nerve
- 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
- Pat Sykes
- Debbie Haywood (cancer treatments), friend of Ann and Bruce Richardson.
- Dana Kimrey. He is the brother of Lorraine Hines.

Quilt for Sunday, December 31

- Betty Sue Hyder who is undergoing cancer treatments. She is Margaret Williams' sister and Sharyn Gates' aunt

(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 12/22 – Betty McCulloch, David Young

Sunday 12/24 – Dathene Hawkins

Monday 12/25 – Barry Parker

Tuesday 12/26 – Kennedy Dunlap

Wednesday 12/27 – Sarah Lockamy, Scott Read, Laura Harris

Thursday 12/28 – Billy Hall

Friday 12/29 – Pam Kimrey, Jennifer Noah

Saturday 12/30 – Barry Walker, Charles William Davis

Sunday 12/31 – Jake Berry, Joe Bumgarner, Barry Roberts, Phil Wimberly, Charlotte James

Monday 1/1 – Roger McFalls, Katie Bumgarner, Callie Clapp Durham

Tuesday 1/2 – Iris Ashley, Lora Cunningham

Wednesday 1/3 – David Jones

Thursday 1/4 – James Walker

Friday 1/5 – Linda Lovitte, Jacob Blankenship, Jessica Pope

Saturday 1/6 – Cari Humphrey, John Lee, Rodney Overcash

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

December 24th – 10:30am Service

Acolytes: Corbin Smith
Greeters: Brenda & Jimmy Berry
Ushers: Grace Dunlap/Patty Maseth
Nursery: Sue Powell/Mary Beth Elliott
Scripture: Cheryl L. Parker
Trustee Open/Close: Leigh & Roger McFalls

December 24th – 7:00pm Service

Acolytes: Kennedy Dunlap/Michael Roberts
Greeters: Ashley Parker/ Cheryl Humphrey
Ushers: Mary Emma Roberts/Grace Dunlap
Nursery: Debby Donnelly/Pam Kimrey
Scripture: Grace Dunlap
Communion Servers: Faith Parker/Mary Emma Roberts
Trustee Open/Close: Leigh & Roger McFalls

December 31st

Acolytes: Isaac Conway/Isabella Conway
Greeters: Cheryl S. Parker/Grace Dunlap
Ushers: Cheryl L & Barry Parker
Nursery: Lorraine Hines/Ava Lee
Scripture: Cheryl Humphrey
Trustee Open/Close: Bruce Richardson

January 7th

Acolytes: Corbin Smith/Gracie Hall
Greeters: Mary Emma Roberts/Laurie Rogers
Ushers: Mike Roberts/Faith Parker
Nursery: Dale Smithson/Sharyn Gates
Scripture: Lorraine Parker
Communion Servers: Cheryl L & Barry Parker
Trustee Open/Close: Gary Spake

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

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 Opening

Joint Sunday School (Adults)

10:30am **CAROL FEST** Service

5:30 – 8:00pm New Year's Eve at the Grove

JANUARY 2024 CALENDAR



Monday, January 1

Wednesday, January 3

6:30pm Worship Band

7:00pm Worship Choir

Sunday, January 7

9:30am Sunday School

10:30am Worship Service

4:00pm take down decorations

Monday, January 8

7:00pm Trustees Meeting

Wednesday, January 10

Mary Martha Busy Ladies

6:30pm Worship Band

7:00pm Worship Choir

Fri-Mon, Jan. 12-15

Youth Winter Retreat

Sunday, January 14

9:30am Sunday School

10:30am Worship Service

10:45am Children's Church

Wednesday, January 17

6:30pm Worship Band

7:00pm Worship Choir

Sunday, January 21	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 3:00pm – 5:00pm Safe Sanctuary Training – fellowship hall
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Wednesday, January 24	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir
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Friday-Sat., Jan. 26-27	Walnut Grove Crafters
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Sunday, January 28	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 10:45am Children's Church 3:00pm Calendaring session for committee chairs
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Monday, January 29	7:00pm Covenant Council meeting
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Wednesday, January 31	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir
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See You Sunday!!