

Growing up, I loved to swim, but getting there was not easy for me. When my parents were helping me to learn to swim, I hated taking the floaties off. In my little mind, once the floaties came off, then I was going to sink for sure. After a lot of persuasion from my mom, and my dad promising not to let me sink, I took the floaties off. Turns out I not only did not sink, but I was able to swim faster and more freely. I was then able to play all the games that my brother and his friends were playing. After being in swim class for a couple of years, I joined my neighborhood swim team, and I loved it! I would have never found my love for swimming, or the peace that comes with it for me, if I had not taken off the floaties. In John 1:35-51, it says;

35The next day John again was standing with two of his disciples, 36and as he watched Jesus walk by he exclaimed, "Look, here is the Lamb of God!" 37The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. 38When Jesus turned and saw them following, he said to them, "What are you looking for?" They said to him, "Rabbi" (which translated means Teacher), "where are you staying?" 39He said to them, "Come and see." They came and saw where he was staying, and they remained with him that day. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon. 40One of the two who heard John speak and followed him was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. 41He first found his brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated Anointed). 42He brought Simon to Jesus, who looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You are to be called Cephas" (which is translated Peter).

Jesus Calls Philip and Nathanael

43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." 44Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. 45Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him about whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote, Jesus son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." 47When Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him, he said of him, "Here is truly an Israelite in whom there is no deceit!" 48Nathanael asked him, "Where did you get to know me?" Jesus answered, "I saw you under the fig tree before Philip called you." 49Nathanael replied, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!" 50Jesus answered, "Do you believe because I told you that I saw you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than these." 51And he said to him, "Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'" (NRSV)

When I read this passage, it follows the passage about John the Baptist, explaining that though he baptizes with water, the one greater than him will come to baptize in the name of the Holy Spirit. This idea of baptism tends to make me think of my time swimming and the journey I went through

to realize just how fun it could be. When thinking about that and then reading the verse above, I think about what the disciples floaties? And what would it have been like if they were too scared to take off the "floaties"? What would they have missed out on? The disciples had jobs and, more than likely, families that loved them and whom they loved. These jobs, lives, and friendships that the disciples built up were, in my mind, their floaties. When they heard about the one greater than them, everyone they knew not only took their floaties off, but ripped them off. They did this in the hope that what they had heard about this "man" was true. That faith and trust led them on an incredible journey where they saw miracles, people raised from the dead, and a multitude of new friendships and places. So today I ask myself, where am I keeping the "floaties" on in my life, and what could I be missing out on by not taking them off? How can God enter into my life if I would just trust him with that part of my life?

Emily Phenicé, Duke Intern

## NEW AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

### Valentine's Dinner

**You are invited to Walnut Grove's Valentine Celebration on Saturday, February 7th. The doors will open at 5:30pm and the meal starts at 6:00. Please RSVP by February 1st. The cost of the meal is by donation. The menu is lasagna, or chicken alfredo, salad, bread, and homemade desserts. 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 and will also be willing to decorate a table. Sign up sheets are also available in the fellowship hall on the bulletin board. All proceeds will go to the new carpet in the fellowship hall.**



The poster features a central photograph of a dining table set for a meal. In the center is a white card with a purple heart containing a white cross. The table is decorated with lit candles in glass holders, a glass of red wine, and silverware. The background is a soft pink with decorative wavy lines.

*Valentine's Day  
Dinner Fundraiser*

TO HELP OFFSET THE COST OF NEW  
CARPET IN THE FELLOWSHIP HALL

THIS EVENT IS BY DONATION  
**FEBRUARY 7, 2026**  
DOORS OPEN AT 5:30PM  
DINNER AT 6:00PM  
FOLLOWED BY ENTERTAINMENT  
MENU: LASAGNA OR CHICKEN ALFREDO,  
SALAD, BREAD AND HOMEMADE DESSERTS

Walnut Grove United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall  
7215 Walnut Grove Church Road in Hurdle Mills

## Important Health Information

Flu season is upon us. Numbers are high. Several members of our congregation have already had it...and more are likely to get it. There are things we can do to decrease our risk of getting it and to decrease the risk of complications if we do.

- Stay home if you're sick! A general rule of thumb for returning to gatherings is that you should be fever-free for at least 24 hours WITHOUT the use of fever-reducing medication (acetaminophen, ibuprofen) and feel well enough to resume activity. Even though you may feel like returning sooner, please think of the high risk and especially vulnerable people in church that may end up in the hospital with complications.
- WASH YOUR HANDS! Many folks just do not understand how important this is. For a while, I'm encouraging that we abstain from handshaking. If you shake hands with someone who just shook hands with 3 other folks, it's like you're shaking hands with all 4. (Personally, I don't like shaking hands at all. Many things other than flu are spread through handshaking.)
- Increase cleaning of commonly touched surfaces (doorknobs, faucets)
- Consider masking if you're going to be in a group. Masks do reduce the transmission of respiratory viruses. Hopefully we'll be making some masks available in the back of the sanctuary for a while. Feel free to pick one up and use it (and please take it with you when you leave 😊).
- Get a flu vaccine. Though the strains in the '25-'26 vaccine aren't a great match for the circulating flu strains, some people will get some protection. It improves your chances of not having serious complications even if you do get sick...and it's better than nothing.
- Stay hydrated! If well-hydrated you can better handle these illnesses if you get them. Things that we do to reduce our risk of flu help with the transmission of other respiratory illnesses as well.
- COVID is alive and well...making us feel lousy and unwell. Vaccine is available.
- RSV is a real issue for young children often putting them in the hospital. Let's protect these babies by getting ourselves vaccinated if 75+ years old OR 50-74 but high risk.
- PNEUMONIA can hit any of us. Any of respiratory viruses and other bacteria can lead to pneumonia. No one needs pneumonia. The more things you prevent, the better your chance of not getting pneumonia. Also check into getting a pneumonia vaccine if you're 50 or older or younger and have high-risk conditions.
- We have at least 2 schools in our end of the county experiencing PERTUSSIS (WHOOPING COUGH) right now...there may be more. I don't know about you, but coughing for 100 days and coughing until I throw up is not my idea of a good time. Kids are vaccinated as infants with a booster dose given at 7th grade entry....then we should all get boosters (Tdap) at least every 10 years. Pertussis frequently puts young kids in the hospital. They can't be fully vaccinated until they've received 4 vaccine doses given between 2 months and 18 months of age. We need to prevent pertussis in ourselves to protect them.

MEASLES is near and it won't be surprising, at all, if we get cases. South Carolina has 434 confirmed cases so far...and hundreds exposed and in quarantine. Quarantine for unvaccinated persons exposed to measles lasts from around Day 5 after exposure to Day 21 after last exposure. This means no school, no work, no visitors for at least 16ish days. Fortunately, our vaccine compliance numbers are good (as measured by kindergarten entry data). But we do have pockets of folks who have chosen not to vaccinate and if measles enters those communities, it'll go on for weeks. Even fully vaccinated persons can get measles with enough exposure. Measles complications can last a lifetime.

Measles is the most infectious disease known. If a person with measles is in a room, the virus remains in the air for 2 hours just waiting to jump on an unvaccinated person. Children are usually vaccinated at 12 months-of-age and again at 4-5 years-of-age. People born before 1957 are generally considered to be immune to measles because we probably had the disease...I know I did...I remember it. If born after 1957 and don't know your immunization status, get the vaccine unless you're pregnant or immunocompromised. 1 dose gives good protection, but 2 doses give great protection.

These are interesting times...and scary times for those of us in Public Health and other healthcare-related fields. Please pay attention, seek valid information sources and help us all look out for each other.

Stay well!!

~Judy Butler

## **2026 Lake Junaluska Music and Worship Arts Week**

**Monday, June 22 to Friday, June 26**

Thinking toward the summer? Registration is now open for this year's music week. We will leave from the church on Sunday afternoon, June 21. Worship and rehearsals start on Monday, June 22. Children who have completed the 3rd grade and up are welcome to attend. If your child or youth is interested, let Leigh know at 919-818-3317. More information will be coming soon.

# Your family's Lenten journey starts here.

Join us for Lent-a-Palooza on  
Sunday, February 22 from 12:30pm  
– 3:30pm at

 **Chestnut Ridge**

Camp and Retreat Center

Ever wondered how to mark the sacred season of Lent at home with kids? Come join us! You and your kids will create tools you can use at home for prayer, scripture reading, service, and other spiritual practices throughout Lent.

This FREE event includes:

- Lunch
- Crafts & Activities
- Storytelling

SCAN HERE



## 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. You may also access the link on our website for convenient giving. Alternatively, cash or check contributions continue to be accepted through our tithes and offerings. Your generosity helps us continue serving Christ and reaching out to our community in mission and faithful witness.



## JOYS & CONCERNS

### Prayer List

- Rosalind Hill with health issues. She is Gary Spake's mother.,
- Rick Johnson with health issues. He is friends with Judy Butler and many other church members.
- Locklynn Gribble, preemie in NICU. Her mother is a friend of Judy Butler.
- Paul Beck, with health issues. He is a member of Walnut Grove UMC.
- Rev. Meg Hoffman, battling cancer. She's the director of Seeds of Faith at Camp Chestnut Ridge.
- David Leonard having complications from surgery. He is the dad of a friend of Faith Parker.
- Timmy Parker with serious health issues. He is Barry Parker's brother
- Worth Miller with serious health issues. He is a friend and neighbor of Jimmy and Brenda Berry.
- Neil Donnelly with health issues.
- Helen Miller with serious health issues. She is the aunt of Pat Beck's brother-in-law.
- 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.
- Katherine Huey, with health issues. She is Rick Huey's mom.
- 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
- Herbert and JoAnn Cates, both with health issues. They are members of Walnut Grove UMC.
- Jerry Forrester, bilateral lung cancer
- Liz Matthews, friend of Katie Whitaker
- Debbie Langdale diagnosed with stage 5 kidney disease, waiting for transplant. Friend of John and Brooke Sherron

- Kelly Schoch, with brain cancer. She is co-worker of Erica Nading
- 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**

Billie Milton, mother of Stuart Milton (St. Pauls), peacefully passed away on Wednesday, January 7. Please keep the Milton family in your prayers. Condolences may be sent to Stuart Milton, St. Pauls UMC, 300 Harper Ave, Carolina Beach, NC 28428-4919.

### **Birthdays**

Friday 1/16 – Martha Long, Worth Miller, Clint Taylor  
Saturday 1/17 – Emily Sykes Donovan, Taylor Oakley, Susan Taylor  
Sunday 1/18 – Amanda Matherly  
Monday 1/19 – Sara Bordeaux, Owen Merritt  
Tuesday 1/20 – Michael Dow, June Bumgarner, Matt Roberts  
Wednesday 1/21 – Pam Rodgers  
Friday 1/23 – Katherine Berezny  
Saturday 1/24 – Caylen Quigley

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](#)

### **Serving in Worship**

#### **January 18th**

Acolytes: Wyatt James/Magnus Kemnitz  
Greeters: Margaret Anne Dow/Beverly Huey  
Ushers: Margaret Anne Dow/Pat Beck  
Scripture: Cheryl Humphrey  
Nursery: Cathy Boling/Debby Donnelly  
Financial Rep: Judy Butler  
Trustee Open/Close: Gary Spake

## **January 25th**

Acolytes: Samantha Johnson/Ellen Johnson

Greeters: Kennedy Dunlap/Grace Dunlap

Ushers: Phil & Lorraine Hines

Scripture: Kennedy Dunlap

Nursery: Margaret Williams/Mary Emma Roberts

Financial Rep: Tyler Smith

Trustee Open/Close: Michael James

**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**

Fri-Sun, January 16-18      Youth Winter Retreat

Sunday, January 18      9:30am Sunday School  
10:30am Worship Service

Wed., January 21      6:30pm Worship Band  
7:00pm Worship Choir

Thursday, January 22      6:30pm Worship Committee meeting

Sunday, January 25      9:30am Sunday School  
10:30am Worship Service  
10:45am Children's Church

Monday, January 26      6:30pm Covenant Council meeting

Wed., January 28      6:30pm Worship Band  
7:00pm Worship Choir

Fri-Sat., January 30-31      Walnut Grove Crafters

See You Sunday!!