

The Gospel of Listening and Stillness

"Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her."

—Luke 10:42b

My wife, Fiorella, has two sisters, Eliana and Cynthia. I'm always struck by how different they are. Eliana, the eldest, is home-loving and hospitable; she loves to show affection by serving. Fiore, by contrast, is independent, prefers to go out, and is always looking for ways to change the world. Cynthia, the youngest, is a fitness influencer on social media, she is entrepreneurial and always eager to dress well and look her best. Whenever we visit the three of them, I can't help thinking, "The Guerrero sisters are like the March sisters in Little Women." Eliana reminds me of Meg, proud of her role as mother and wife; Fiore recalls Jo, with her adventurous, independent spirit; and Cynthia feels like Amy, elegant and beauty-seeking. Listening to their conversations is a delight: their differing personalities create a kind of cheerful chaos that, though I can't quite explain it, entertains me and makes me feel at home.

I open my Bible to Luke 10 and think, "If I have the Guerrero sisters and Theodore Laurence ('Laurie') has the March sisters, surely Jesus had Martha and Mary!" These two sisters were just as different: Martha naturally takes on the role of hostess, while Mary is eager to learn everything the young Rabbi has to say. Luke—the evangelist who most emphasizes women as disciples—doesn't record that detail by accident. He does not believe Christian women should be passive: he shows Martha acting as the mistress of the house, exercising a public role unusual for a woman; and he portrays Mary in the posture of a male disciple, "at the Master's feet," in an age when women were barred from rabbinic schools. The issue, then, is not their personalities—but something deeper.

Jesus, as a trusted friend, is drawn into Martha's complaint against Mary: "Tell her to help me!" We know His answer: "You are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one." I reread the passage and wonder, "Did Martha really fail? Was Jesus unfair to her? And what is that 'one thing' that is necessary?"

For a long time, tradition treated Martha unfairly, reading her as sheer activity and Mary as contemplation—and therefore superior. Yet Jesus never asks Martha to give up hospitality or service. Speaking affectionately ("Martha, Martha..."), He wants to free her, not from what she does but from what steals her joy: the feeling that all the weight rests on her shoulders. First-century social expectations pressed the hostess into lavish service, much as today we can feel pressure to please everyone, fear losing people, meet beauty standards, or avoid rejection. In her eagerness to be a good hostess, Martha is isolated in the kitchen—away from friends, neighbors, her sister, and Jesus Himself.

Mary, by contrast, has chosen "what is better." Jesus neither abolishes hospitality nor exalts passivity. He reminds us we need right priorities so that our efforts do not turn to anxiety. Mary embodies a kind of mindful attention that resists social pressure. She listens to the Word, she attends to the voice that helps

her examine her conscience, discern the important (not merely the urgent), and equips her for a non-anxious, free life. Luke thus suggests we be Mary first and Martha afterward. Both archetypes must coexist in us, lest we lapse into activism without listening or contemplation without engagement—but we must start with listening.

So, what is “the one thing necessary”? Not passivity, but the attentive stillness born of the Word. It is no accident Luke places Martha and Mary between the Good Samaritan and the Lord’s Prayer: to love neighbor and love God we must first sit, rest, and listen intently to the divine voice that shows us what truly matters and makes us authentically ourselves.

Blessings,

Duke intern, Alejandro Rivas

NEW AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Vacation Bible School

Walnut Grove UMC
invites you to VBS 2025

DISCOVERING THE BIGNESS OF GOD
MAGNIFIED!
PSALM 34:3
IN THE SMALLEST OF THINGS

JULY 20-23
5:30-7:30pm
Dinner served nightly

To register your child(ren):
Scan the qr code or go to
bit.ly/2025wgumcvbs

7215 Walnut Grove Church Road
Hurdle Mills, NC 27541
919-732-5722
office@walnutgroveumc.org

Join us this summer for our 2025 Vacation Bible School 'Magnified'. Nursery- 5th graders are invited to join us on Sunday, July 20th- Wednesday, July 23rd. Dinner will be served each evening at 5:30 and programming is from 6-7:30. Volunteer opportunities are available, please reach out to Ashley Parker if you would like to help at

Ashleymorganparker@gmail.com



Estate Sale – In Memory of Charles & Ruby Tilley

We invite you to join us for an estate sale at the home of Charles and Ruby Tilley, located at **2701 Little River Church Road, Hurdle Mills**, on **Friday, July 25th from 2:00 - 7:00 PM** and **Saturday, July 26th from 8:00 AM - 2:00 PM**.

A wide variety of items will be available, including:

- **Household goods:** glassware, kitchenware, decorative pieces, and a collection of Miss Ruby's hats. Some items are vintage/antique.
- **Furniture:** select pieces from throughout the home
- **Outdoor items:** tools, lawn equipment, and patio furniture

Church family are welcome and encouraged to schedule an early visit prior to the public sale. To arrange a visit, please call or text Wesley at **919-749-0173**.

25% of the proceeds will be donated to the OCIM Samaritan Relief Fund.

Wesley & Sonja Tilley

New Gaga Ball Pit for Youth and Kids!

Wondering what that strange wooden octagon is by the playground? Earlier this week, we built a gaga ball pit for our teens and older kids to enjoy! Gaga ball is like a mix between four-square and dodgeball and is a favorite activity of our teenagers. A huge thanks to Lou and Tom Rutledge, our interns Daniel and Alejandro and our youth who took on this three day project!



Opportunities and Work Days with Disaster Ministry

Deployment dates for North Corridor Early Response Team. To volunteer or if you have any questions, please contact Jim Polhamus at jbuspolhamusii@gmail.com. Please prayerfully consider joining us and mark your calendars below:

July 17 -19, LTRG07, Columbus Co, NC - (Leland Disaster Center, Zion UMC Parsonage, Leland, NC) - open to ERT and non ERT members

August 7 -9, LTRG08, Columbus Co, NC - (Leland Disaster Center, Zion UMC Parsonage, Leland, NC) - open to ERT and non ERT members

Sep 8 - 13, LTRG09, Western NC Conference UMC- (Location TBD (Spruce Pine, Asheville, Hendersonville), UNC-Wesley students to potentially join Thursday -Saturday, - open 1 ERT to 1 non ERT member, Reservation and awaiting confirmation

Oct 9 - 11, LTRG10, Columbus Co, NC - (Leland Disaster Center, Zion UMC Parsonage, Leland, NC) - open to ERT and non ERT member

OCIM Update

Summer break has arrived! Food Shortages for students during the summer break are a serious issue as many children rely on school meals for their daily nutrition. When school is out, many students lose access to these meals, thus leading to increased food insecurity.

Some communities have summer feeding programs to help bridge the gap. For example, in Northern Orange County, Orange Congregations in Missions (OCIM) aid in helping families provide food for their families that might otherwise go hungry. OCIM like other Programs are often funded by state or federal initiatives that aim to ensure children receive proper nutrition even when school is not in session. Many of those funds have been cut. However, OCIM receives donations of food or money from several churches such as our church to help provide food for the hungry.

However, challenges remain. Many families struggle with rising grocery prices, rent prices, and cost of gas, and lack sufficient resources to meet the demand. Organizations like OCIM work to distribute food and essentials to families in need, recognizing that summer hunger can have long-term effects on children's health and education.

1. Once a family is approved by Social Services and OCIM's Kay Stagner, Mrs. Stagner will give volunteers the paperwork to show that the family was approved.
2. Our volunteers in the food pantry will fill the request for food from the shelves in the Pantry based on the number in the family.
3. The volunteers will place grocery items in grocery bags in a grocery cart for the recipient to take home.

Many of you have made donations of canned food and other items as well as monetary donations to help OCIM meet the needs of the hungry in Northern Orange County.

Our church gave 692 pounds of food in June.

Please consider bringing canned food like peanut butter, green beans, corn, jelly, rice, spaghetti sauce, tomato soup, chicken soup, to church on **August 31** (our next 5th Sunday).

There is a grey tub in the Fellowship Hall where you can place your donations.

Another way to help: If you are raising vegetables in your gardens and have more than you can use, please consider taking the extra veggies to OCIM located in Hillsborough. It will be greatly appreciated.

If you want to donate money, please write in the memo of your check, OCIM or OCIM on the offering envelope then drop the check or envelope in the offering plate.

Let's make another concerted effort to work together to feed the children and their families in Northern Orange County on August 31st.

Please see Jimmy or me if you have questions. Thank you for your donations and your willingness to give to such a worthy cause.

~Jimmy and Brenda Berry

Birthday/Anniversary Taskforce

Friends, we would love your help! We hear you! If you think you have a good sense of the church community and folks in attendance and could help us look to keep our birthday list current, we need your help! We also would like to add anniversaries to the list too as we celebrate each other's lives! This would be a short-term commitment and would be in collaboration with our summer interns, Daniel and Alejandro. Thank you for considering.

Reach out to Pastor Laura at ldunap@nccumc.org if you are willing to help as we try to stay up to date.

College Ministry Coordinator Needed

Friends, we are in need of a college ministry coordinator for our church. If you would like to volunteer and take on this important role, please see Kara Roberts, our Fellowship Chair, or Lorraine Hines for details.

Free Booster Seats

Does anyone need a booster safety child seat for their car? There are two booster seats in the Fellowship Hall if you do.

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

- Gilbert Lee in Prince George, VA, who recently had surgery for cancer. He is Richard Lee's father
- Gene Parker, brother of Dorothy Roberts, uncle of Mike Roberts, and family of Debbie Oakley and Sue Powell
- Craig Powell, brother of Ed Powell, with health problems
- Maria Guerrero, mother-in-law of Alejandro Rivas, Duke intern, as she deals with terminal illness.
- Herbert and JoAnn Cates, both with health issues. They are members of Walnut Grove UMC.
- Ryder Fesperman, an Orange High School student, who is having health issues. He is a friend of Tucker Dillard.
- 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
- Will Hall, of Cedar Grove, NC with serious health issues- son of Billy Hall and Lynn Clark, nephew of Tommy Hall and Lorraine Parker, cousin of James Parker.
- Kathy Kimrey with health concerns. She is the sister-in-law of Lorraine Hines and Pam Kimrey.

Quilt

Pastor Mandy Sayers from Saxapahaw United Methodist Church who met for the first Sunday of her new appointment and the church was flooded by the waters of a tropical storm plus her father died. Pastor Mandy Sayers was the former pastor of Rick and Beverly Huey.

(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.)

Birthdays

Saturday 7/19 – Hannah Gibbs, Kayla Burton

Sunday 7/20 – Kailey Latta

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

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

Thursday 7/24 – Donnie Crabtree, Jesse Whitaker

Friday 7/25 – Ashley Ford, Tony Rigsbee Jr.

Saturday 7/26 – Linda Clayton, Abby Lee

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 20th

Acolytes: Russell Whitaker/Michael Roberts

Greeters: Clay & Cheryl S Parker

Ushers: Jenny Blalock/Grace Dunlap

Scripture: Emma Beckham

Nursery: Cheryl L Parker/Mary Emma Roberts

Trustee Open/Close: Patty Maseth

Financial Rep: Lou Rutledge

July 27th

Acolytes: Callie Smith/Anna Robinson

Greeters: Mary Emma Roberts/Laurie Rogers

Ushers: Chris & Cathy Boling

Scripture: Brenda Berry

Nursery: Grace Dunlap/Krystal Robinson

Trustee Open/Close: Sharyn Gates

Financial Rep: Emma Beckham

Mowing Schedule

July 19- Phil Hines

July 26- Jimmy Berry

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

Sunday, July 20	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service
Sun-Wed, July 20-23	5:30-7:30pm Vacation Bible School
Tuesday, July 22	7:00pm Men's Group
Thursday, July 24	6:00pm SPRC meeting 6:30pm Harvest Festival meeting
Fri-Sat., July 25-26	Walnut Grove Crafters
Sunday, July 27	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 10:45am Children's Church
Monday, July 28	6:30pm Covenant Council meeting
Wed., July 30	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir
See You Sunday!!	