

Salt for the Earth

"You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its taste, how can it be made salty again?" (Matt. 5:13).

Having had two grandparents and two uncles with diabetes, I'm at an age when I need to be strict about taking care of my blood sugar. Although consistency is hard for me, over the years I have cut back on sugar (thanks to my wife's help). But if the idea of a world without sugar frightens me, a world without salt seems unimaginable. I can live without donuts and cookies, but imagining rotisserie chicken or Peruvian ceviche without salt feels like heresy!

I think that in Matthew 5:13 Jesus used our appreciation for salt to remind us that we are people with a purpose. In that time, salt was as important or even more important than it is today: it was used to flavor food, preserve it from corruption, and also to purify. In this sense, within the ethics of the gospel, we are valuable, necessary, and blessed (Matt. 5:1) as we help preserve the world we inhabit. In times when existential emptiness abounds, the idea of being salt, of understanding our relational nature in how we treat others, can give meaning and fullness to the way we live.

And this is so because salt can lose its taste in the same way we can lose our sense of relating to and serving others. That is something profoundly human. It is striking that the verb Matthew uses can mean not only "to lose its taste," but also "to become foolish." In that sense, losing our "saltiness" can mean losing discernment, purpose, and faithfulness.

For this very reason, Jesus uses the metaphor of salt as a kind of warning. It is a reminder of our nature. No one puts salt in a saltshaker to admire it. Its value is heightened when it seasons food, in the same way our human nature is dignified and strengthened through our love for others.

Alejandro Rivas, 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.



*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

OCIM – Souper Bowl of Caring 2026



SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 8, 2026

Let's Tackle Hunger Together!

Souper Bowl of Caring 2026



- 1. BUILD YOUR TEAM** - Gather your congregation, your business, or even your neighborhood!
- 2. COLLECT** - Hold your donation drive of dollars and healthy food items with your group
- 3. DONATE** Bring your food & monetary donations to OCIM during the week after the Super Bowl.



Orange Congregations
In Mission

2026 Lake Junaluska Music and Worship Arts Week

Monday, June 22 to Friday, June 26

Let's talk summer with the warmth and beauty of the North Carolina mountains! Registration is now open for this year's music week at Lake Junaluska Assembly. This is an annual event designed for worship leaders, pastors, musicians, and singers of all ages. We will leave from the church on Sunday afternoon, June 21. Worship services and rehearsals start on Monday, June 22. Children who have completed the 3rd grade, youth, and adults are welcome to attend. Chaperones are also needed.

Activities and events include worship services, choir rehearsals, youth talent show, crafts/games, recreation (swimming, etc.) We will stay in a large house overlooking the lake. If your child, youth, or you are interested, let Leigh know at 919-818-3317 or leighmcfalls@gmail.com

Sunday Night Meal Sign Up

We are looking for five people or groups to sign up to cook a meal for Sunday nights. Sign up here! [SundayNightMeals.mealsignup](https://www.sundaynightmeals.com/mealsignup)

Sunday Night Meal RSVP

Please sign up if you plan to attend and eat a meal during our Sunday night fellowship! This helps our cooks prepare the right amount of food. [SundayNightMeals.RSVP](https://www.sundaynightmeals.com/RSVP)

Back to Basics
CHRISTIANITY 101

No matter how long you've been in church, there's always more to learn! Join us Sunday nights as we discuss some core questions of the Christian faith together. Invite your friends!

**SUNDAYS,
6-7 PM**

Walnut Grove
UMC

**STARTING
FEB. 15**

Permission to Pause

A couple of extra words alongside the previous message from me about the Women's Retreat. If cost is a hindrance, please do not hesitate to reach out to me. Scholarships are available. Also at church, Kara Roberts, Sue Powell, and our Minister of Discipleship, Lauren Birch, will be helping with the planning so you are welcome to ask me or these dear sisters questions as well. Make sure to register, invite a friend, and keep this retreat in prayer as we move closer to our retreat time together. Peace! -Laura

[Link to Register for Permission to Pause](#)

SAVE THE DATE!

February 20-21, 2026



PERMISSION TO PAUSE

A women's retreat focused on Sabbath,
rest as resistance to a hurried life,
and restoration by God's grace.

Open to ages 13 & up.
\$25 registration fee includes 3 meals and an art project.

LOCATION:
Walnut Grove United Methodist Church
7215 Walnut Grove Church Road Hurdle Mills, NC 27541
www.walnutgroveumc.com 919-732-5722

Scan to register or use
link below



bit.ly/wgumcp2p

Seeds of Faith – Lent-a-Palooza

Your family's Lenten journey starts here.

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



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



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 (WHOOPIING 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

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

- John Facklam from Charlotte, who is in hospice. Prayers for Tish Nowack, her mother, and sister as they await Mr. Facklam's transition. He is the father of Tish Nowack, one of our Walnut Grove Crafters
- Rick Johnson with health issues. He is friends with Judy Butler and many other church members.
- Locklynn Gribble, premie 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.

Quilts

Kelly Kiser from Roxboro who is having health issues. She is the daughter of Brenda and Nat Williams and cousin of Judy Parker.

Locklynn Gribble from Statesville, NC who is a newborn with health issues. Locklynn is the daughter of Haley and Sean Gribble. Locklynn's grandmother is a friend of Judy Butler.

Cheryl Humphrey who is having a knee replacement.

(The prayer quilts 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 or during Communion.)

Birthdays

Friday 2/6 – Erica Smith, Kathryn Daniel

Saturday 2/7 – Lathan Hawkins

Monday 2/9 – Ashton Kajcienski, Kristin Kajcienski

Tuesday 2/10 – Patrick Keough, Tony Holleman

Wednesday 2/11 – Cheryl S Parker, Kaye Parker, Ron Wilkerson

Saturday 2/14 – Will Hall, Bernice Parker, Billy Roberts

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

February 8th

Acolytes: Anna Robinson/Callie Smith

Greeters: Scott & Cheryl Humphrey

Ushers: Grace Dunlap/Aubrey Nading

Scripture: Rick Huey

Nursery: Lorraine Hines/Courtney Humphrey/Kennedy Dunlap

Financial Rep: Rick Huey

Trustee Open/Close: Daniel Johnson

Communion Servers: Krystal Robinson/Stacy Spake

February 15th

Acolytes: Eleanor Whitaker/Isaac Conway

Greeters: Courtney Humphrey/Anita James

Ushers: Courtney Humphrey/Grayson Nading

Scripture: Margaret Anne Dow

Nursery: Sharon Gates/Pam Kimrey/Aubrey Nading

Financial Rep: Lou Rutledge

Trustee Open/Close: Dan Bledsoe

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, February 7	5:30pm Doors open for Valentine Fundraiser 6:00pm Dinner and Fellowship
Sunday, February 8	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 10:45am Children's Church
Monday, February 9	6:30pm Covenant Council meeting
Wed., February 11	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir
Sunday, February 15	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 5:30pm Dinner 6:00pm - 7:00pm Kids Krew, Youth, Adult Confirmation

Wed., February 18	6:15pm Soup Dinner 7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service Worship Choir (following Ash Wednesday Service)
Friday, February 20	6:00pm – 9:00pm Women’s Retreat – Permission to Pause
Saturday, February 21	8:30am – 3:00pm Women’s Retreat – Permission to Pause
Sunday, February 22	9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Worship Service 10:45am Children’s Church 12:30pm – 3:30pm – Lent-A-Palooza at Camp Chestnut Ridge 5:30pm Dinner 6:00pm - 7:00pm Kids Krew, Youth, Adult Confirmation
Wed., February 25	6:30pm Worship Band 7:00pm Worship Choir
Fri-Sat., February 27-28	Walnut Grove Crafters

See You Sunday!!