

Highland United Methodist Church
P.O. Box 34
Callaway, VA 24067



THE HIGHLANDER

December 2017

The Gift of YOU

When my grandmother, Pearl, was a little girl, her best friend, Patsy, lived just two doors down. Pearl and Patsy were not just friends, but also fifth cousins. (Family research shows they are actually quadruple related—double cousins removed and all that.) As a teenager, Pearl would get sick and have to go the hospital. When Pearl returned, she just did not feel like eating. But her kin and friend, Patsy, would get her to eat. As Pearl and Patsy grew up, both had first marriages that did not work out. But, with their second husbands, they began having children: daughters. The legacy of family and friendship continued. Pearl and Patsy's girls became good friends. Even when Patsy's husband got a job in South Carolina and moved the family there—summertime meant family trips to Waynesboro and Charleston.

I am the third generation of this friendship and kinship. Growing up, not only did I have the unconditional and unearned love of my Grandma Pearl, "Granny," my mom's mom, but I had this "Grandma Patsy" from Charleston, South Carolina. She adopted me as her own. Never missing a birthday, always calling and checking in on me. Summers spent at her house were filled with decadent Dove popsicles, watching the entire "North and South" mini-series, and lots of laughter.

Both my grandmothers have died now—they cheer me on from heaven now. Since their death, life got busy, difficult and demanding—summer trips to Charleston and Waynesboro ceased. But, recently, the grace filled bond of friendship and kindness resurrected. Patsy's daughters took a road trip to Waynesboro this fall. Due to my responsibilities in Callaway, I could not take the time off to go to Waynesboro; but the one day I had open, Friday, they graciously and sacrificially hopped back in the car for more hours and drove to Troutville to meet me at the Cracker Barrel.

While rocking and talking, one of Patsy's girls, Kathy, who now has grandchildren of her own, explained she would not be searching and spending on gifts to take back. "No ma'am," she said resolutely in her Southern accent that echoes her mom's mannerisms. "I am bringing them ME as a gift." "I don't put pressure on myself to find them things because they don't need anything. I am coming back to them."

Kathy's words and centering belief has stuck with me, especially as I looked ahead to the four weeks of preparation before Christmas called Advent. Of all the things God could have given us—God gave us thy very self. Jesus, Emmanuel—God with us. And of all the things God wants for Christmas is us, ourselves. But, December has turned into such a busy season of check lists, demands, unmet expectations, that we lose track of the most important gift exchange in the world: God to us and us to God and a God who gives us to each other.

I cherish the book of sermons I received one Christmas from my Grandma Patsy who had to wait and order from a book store—those days before [amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com). But, what I cherish most is the legacy of love—all the moments she gave herself to be present, to love, to listen, to laugh, to claim me as her own. I give thanks for the ways she helped my grandmother Pearl when she was so ill. It is time to stop putting pressure on ourselves to "buy" gifts; as we wait for Jesus to come back to us—let us come back to the people who we need and need our presence. This Advent, may we prepare to receive the gift of God's very self and be loved enough to give our very selves to God and each other.

Amy

Schedules

Acolytes

December 3 Graham Weaver
December 10 Jared Jamison
December 17 Abby Krauss
December 24 Hannah McPherson
December 31 Emma McPherson

Greeter

Garrett Weaver and Mitch Webb

Nursery

December 3 Cindy Jamison
December 10 Donna Guilliams
December 17 Sarah Haskins
December 24 Crystal Weaver
December 31 Sherri Krauss

UMW

The UMW will meet on Monday, **December 18 at 6:30 p. m.** Vicki Hodges will have the devotions for the night. We will be doing "Dirty Santa". If you would like to participate, please bring a \$10.00 gift. Also, please bring a finger food.

OTHER NEWS AND NOTES

Sunday, **December 3** – Terry 's Sunday School Class will be starting an Advent Study. It is called "Faithful: Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph" by Adam Hamilton. From his beginnings as a humble carpenter to his all-important role as the earthly father of Jesus Christ, Joseph's place in the Nativity story is sometimes overlooked but contains valuable lessons for all of us. His courageous actions were crucial to the birth of Christ and God's salvation plan for humanity. Come and join us.

Advent Worship Series

The word "Advent" means "coming." We believe that Jesus is coming—he promised to return. But in our busy lives we sometimes forget and live as if he is not going to return. The four weeks before Christmas, we ponder and pray about Jesus' coming; we awake from our slumber—we become expectant and excited people. We are helped by remembering how others waited for his first coming. We prepare our hearts and lives for the gift of Christmas morning—Jesus Christ. This year's worship series will focus on how God gives thy very self to us and invites us to give the gift of ourselves to God and each other. Forget the packages and wrapping—give the gift of spending time with each other. With scriptures from the Old Testament and New Testament, we will listen for God's help in giving ourselves to God.

YOU are invited to actively worship in a special way this year. For the following Sundays bring these items: **place them on the altar table.** You can take them back home with you after worship. The Advent Wreath Readings remind us how a flash light, a night light, and a lantern, each guide our way, like Jesus' birth as a baby did. Questions: Contact Amy—she would love to hear what you think!?

December 3: Flash Light

December 10: Night Light

December 17: Lantern

December 10 at 10:00 a. m. - Special Christmas Presentation and Potluck following our worship service.

December 16 – Youth Day of Service. Meet at Bojangles in Rocky Mount at 7:30 a.m. for breakfast, then head out for a day of service. (Salvation Army, Henry Fork Service Center, etc.) Followed by a movie at Eagle Cinema “The Star”.

Church for All: Recognizing and Including the Full Spectrum of Abilities in your Church

Is everyone welcome at your church? In *Luke 7:18-23* Jesus answered by pointing out the results of his interactions with the poor and disabled. If that defined his ministry, shouldn't it define ours? Church for all: Recognizing and Including the full spectrum of abilities in your church will be held Saturday, **December 9, 2017** (9:57-3:30 pm) at Piedmont Presbyterian Church. Guest Speaker: Michelle Munger, Peninsula Director for the Faith Inclusion Network of Hampton Roads. Cost is \$10 per person and includes lunch (Please let us know if there are any dietary restrictions when you RSVP). Space is limited, so reserve your spot today. We will begin with an introductory look into the subject of purposefully including people with special needs and their families. We will end with ideas to help you get started! Call Piedmont Presbyterian Church ([540-483-2655](tel:5404832655)) for questions and RSVP.

Christmas Eve Opportunities

This year Christmas Eve is on a Sunday! So, there are plenty of opportunities to worship that day.

8:30 a.m. at New Hope UMC and 10:00 a.m. at Highland UMC we will have special Sunday morning worship services.

Evening opportunities will be available as well:

4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. Communion at Highland UMC. Come by anytime to receive communion at the altar rail. The sanctuary will have music playing so this is a place of prayerful peace.

7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship service at New Hope UMC. We will sing hymns, hear the good news of the story, receive communion, and light candles.

Thank You

Someone led me on an M & M scavenger hunt—a package with a smiley note was on my desk and led me to the pulpit where a bag was there. Thank you to whoever gave this gift—the bag had inside the scripture *Romans 10:9-10*. Amy

CHAT and CHEW! 2.0

Guided by God's Spirit, Bishop Lewis has discerned that the emphasis for the Chat and Chew 2.0 will focus on the work of the Commission on the Way Forward regarding unity and human sexuality, allowing lay and clergy voices across the conference to engage directly in this conversation. You are invited for this conversation on Saturday, **January 6, 2018** at Bethlehem United Methodist Church, 13586 Old Moneta Road, Moneta. Check in begins at 8:30 a.m. Session begins at 9:00 a.m. and concludes with lunch served at 12:30 p.m. Registration and lunch is free but space is LIMITED! Please sign up on the bulletin board (by the sanctuary door) or contact Amy at AmyPannell@vaumc.org or [540-483-1053](tel:5404831053). Deadline is December 24, but sign up now to ensure a spot.

There will be no newsletter for January 2018.

Prayer List

Ronnie and Sue Bernard
Marie Sigmon
Larry Houston
Kelsey Pendleton
Fred and Barbara Guilliams
Jimmy Guilliams
Faye Bollings
Brooke Spicer
Mike Neal
Andrew Snead
B. L. Furrow
Judy Brubaker
Tammy and Terry Underwood
Sarah Haskins
Skye and Nova, Tiffany and Brandon
Rebecca Green

Birthdays and Anniversaries

Dec 2 B – Becky McPherson
B – Billy Moran
A – Keith and Jennifer Brubaker
Dec 6 B – Brad Akers
Dec 9 B – Beth Brown
Dec 12 B – Asher Bryant
B – Kenny Bernard
Dec 13 B – Linda Handy
Dec 15 B – Betsy Stanley
Dec 16 B – Gary Guilliams
Dec 18 B – Bethany Nash
Dec 19 B – Pam Messenger
Dec 20 B – Bobby Sloan
Dec 22 B – Logan Krauss
B – Travis McPherson
A – Jimmy and Betty Guilliams
Dec 25 B – Joyce Johnson
Dec 26 B – Betty Guilliams
Dec 27 B – Chris Hall
B – Gabi Jordan
Dec 28 B – Jennifer Bush
A – Timmy and Michelle Dudley
B – Connie Stanley
Dec 30 B – Sue Bernard
Jan 1 B – Wileina Furrow
Jan 3 B – Tricia Custer
Jan 6 A – Coy and Caroline Guilliams
Jan 10 B – Newton Guilliams
Jan 12 A – Earl and Helen Akers
Jan 14 B – Cindy Jamison
Jan 15 B – Eric Krauss
Jan 16 B – Paula Furrow
Jan 17 B – Jordan Dudley
Jan 18 B – Jonathan Custer
Jan 20 B – Emily Bayley
Jan 21 B – Jennifer Brubaker
Jan 24 A – Jonathan and Amanda Custer
Jan 27 B – Ronnie Bernard
B – Logan Custer
Jan 29 B – Jimmy Guilliams
Jan 31 B – Benny Fisher

