

Groce UMC's

The Messenger

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The Weeds

Making Room For Others to Grow

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Cover Photo
By Veronica

The Weeds

Making Room For Others to Grow

STORY BY JILL RHINEHART

Jesus told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like someone who planted good seed in his field. While people were sleeping, an enemy came and planted weeds among the wheat and went away. When the stalks sprouted and bore grain, then the weeds also appeared.

"The servants of the landowner came and said to him, 'Master, didn't you plant good seed in your field? Then how is it that it has weeds?' "An enemy has done this,' he answered. "The servants said to him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them?' " But the landowner said, 'No, because if you gather the weeds, you'll pull up the wheat along with them. Let both grow side by side until the harvest. And at harvest time I'll say to the harvesters, First gather the weeds and tie them together in bundles to be burned. But bring the wheat into my barn.'"

Matthew 13:24-30 CEB

Recently, while admiring a vibrant bed of wildflowers swaying gently in the breeze. The colors were striking, and the scene felt almost sacred. As I stood there taking it all in, I was reminded of the definition of a weed. While participating in a nature walk, the ranger began pointing out the weeds growing among the flowers we were admiring. Curious, I asked, "How do you know what's a weed and what isn't?" He smiled and said simply, "A weed is anything you don't want."

His response stuck with me.

Isn't it true that in our own lives, we often carry what we might call "weeds"? Struggles we'd rather not deal with. Pain from

loss. Regret over past actions or missed opportunities. Weeds are those things we wish we could pull out and be done with. But even Jesus, in one of His parables, spoke of weeds growing among the wheat..

It made me wonder: when God looks at the garden of humanity, what does God see?

Does God see weeds among the flowers—or something more?

One of my favorite childhood characters, Winnie the Pooh, once said, "Weeds are flowers too, once you get to know them." That quote carries more wisdom than it first appears to. How often are we quick to judge others before we truly know them? We may look at someone's appearance, culture, past, or struggles and decide—consciously or not—that they are a weed. But what if they're just a flower we haven't taken the time to understand?

What if the struggle we have gone through, with time, blossoms into a beautiful opportunity?

I know my own life isn't free from flaws. Yet I hope, with all my heart, that God sees me as one of God's flowers—a child still growing, still evolving. And I pray that I can learn to see others the same way.

Maybe our job isn't to do the weeding. Maybe our role is to love, to listen, and to make room for others to bloom. The tending of the garden—the true judging—is best left to the One who planted it in the first place.

Let's try to see the garden the way God does: full of color, potential, and grace—even in places we least expect.



Outreach Financial Update

UPDATE BY JANE WILLIAMS

At the April Outreach Ministry meeting, Linda Geer gave this report regarding Welcome Table. Because of an outpouring of donations, Welcome Table had a bank balance of over \$11,000. Maro Slaughter and Linda Geer decided to take \$3,000 and donate it towards the principle of the building loan for the second financial quarter at Groce Church. It has always been their intention to help pay the utilities and expenses at the church.

Inspired by this action, at the May meeting, Outreach Ministry, with \$3,998 in their restricted fund account, voted unanimously to donate \$2,000 towards the principle of the building loan. Currently the monthly payment is \$1,050 with an interest rate of 6.8%, and the balance of the loan is \$52,458, after the Welcome Table donation.

Outreach Ministry hopes that this will encourage others to look at Groce's first quarterly financial report emailed 5/15/25 and bring more awareness about our church's finances as a whole.

Table of Sixteen

UPDATE BY LINDA LANKTON

The monthly Table of Sixteen lunch will be on Wednesday, June 18, at 11:30am at the Longhorn Steak House off of Tunnel Road. Anyone wanting to join us is welcome to come!

Birthdays & Anniversaries

06/01 Harry Gibbs

06/06 Max Phillips
Handley Rhein

06/07 Carole Gilham
Laura Harrelson

06/08 Loring McIntyre

06/14 Calli Hamrick

06/15 Irene Griffin

06/16 Donnella Boyd

06/17 Sasha Hayes

06/24 Gary Brockway
Charlotte Dean
Lindsey Hamrick
Zach Hamrick

06/27 Anna-Lee Franklin
Lilly-Kate Franklin

06/28 Skylar Geer
Tabitha Meadows

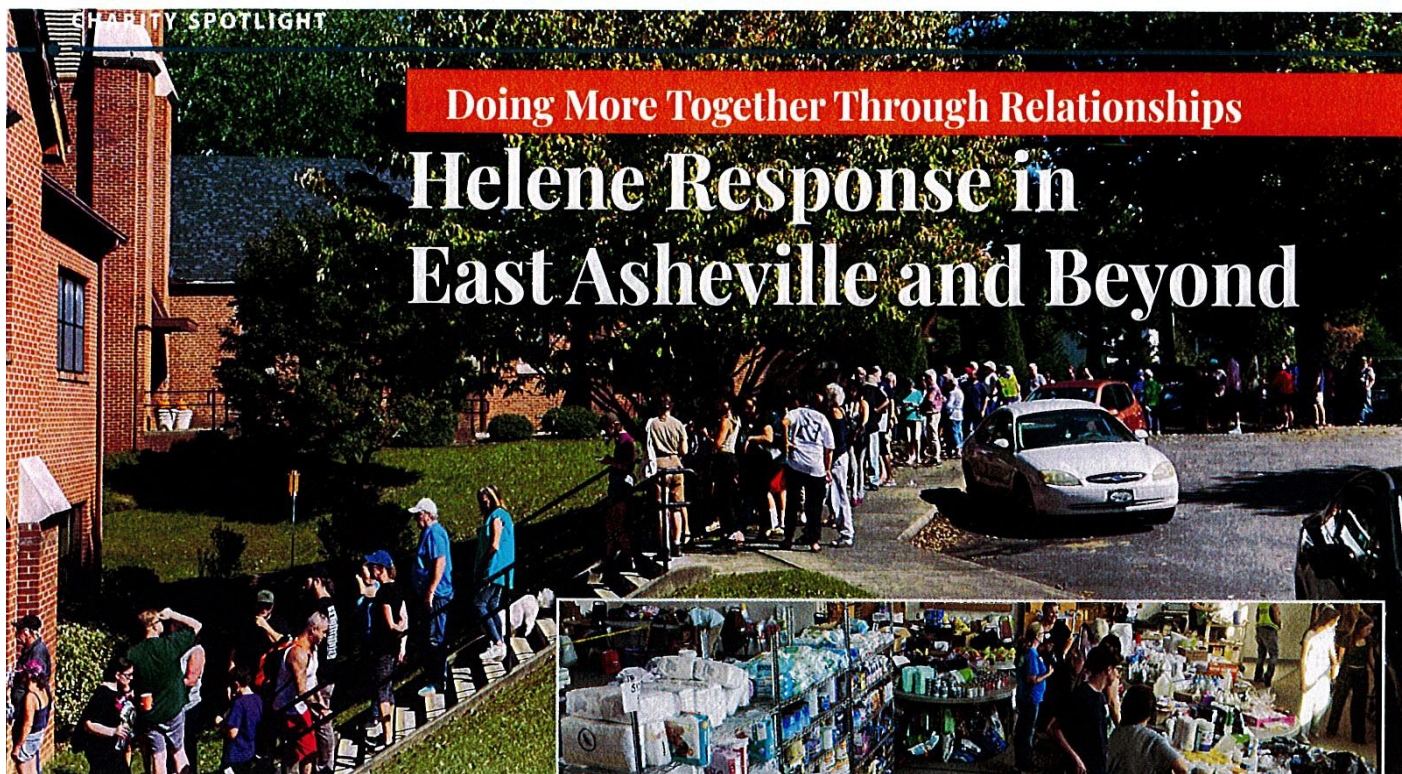
06/08 Judy & Larry Sexton (56)

06/09 Dennis & Pam Butler (18)

06/20 Dixie & Frank Quinlan (66)

06/23 Bob & Tracey Briggs (41)
Brenda & Patrick Guilfoyle (41)
Allen & Louise Holden (41)
Gary & Linda Lankton (52)

06/30 Bob & Joan Cauble (69)



As Western North Carolina struggled in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene without interstate access, power, water, cellular service, or internet, Marsha van Rijssen's (of local fame for her annual Prom Dress Exchange) thoughts turned to the half dozen refrigerators and freezers full of perishable food that were part of Groce United Methodist Church's weekly free community Welcome Table meal program.

Marsha, a key volunteer at the Welcome Table, showed up at the parsonage of Groce's pastor, Jill Rhinehart, asking for approval to cook the food and serve it. It was an obvious decision for Jill, though she had no idea how they would pull this off.

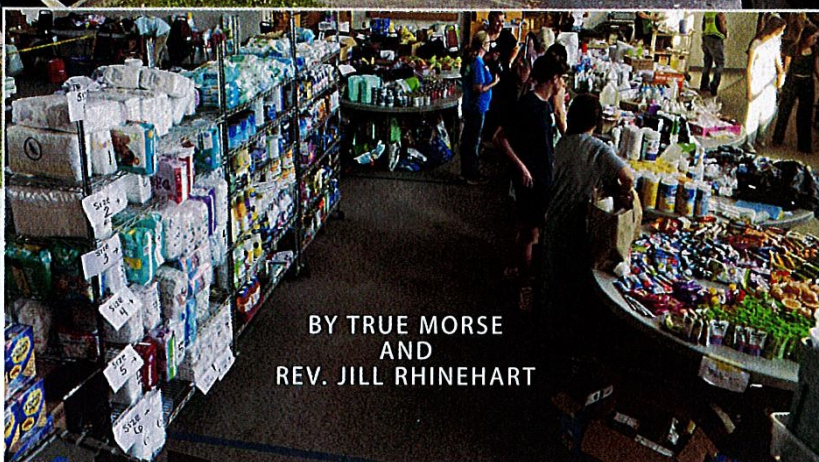
By the second day, about 500 meals a day were being prepared and served. The meal effort transformed Groce UMC into a pop-up community relief hub, which ultimately served more than 7,000 meals and distributed a mountain of supplies until the need in the community around Groce dropped off toward the end of October. The normal Welcome Table team was

augmented by dozens of community volunteers, who helped plan and prepare meals without running water or normal power. Generators kept refrigerators and freezers cold. Water was trailered in from private well systems operating on generators. Volunteers showed up to unload, organize and help "shoppers" in the 3,600-square-foot resource room, providing supplies in the early aftermath of the storm.

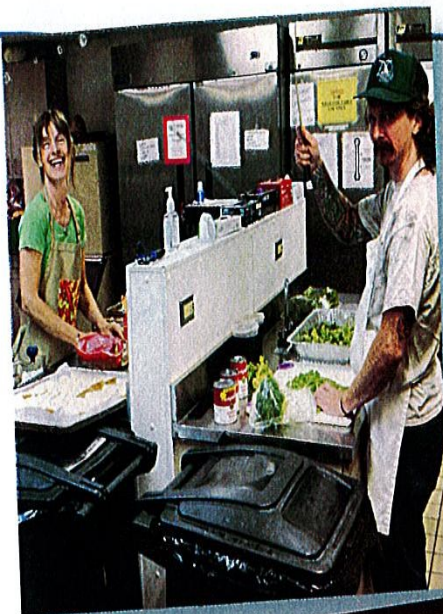
Organizers estimate that Groce UMC members accounted for only about a quarter of the volunteers in this community effort. The collaboration among local and many individual volunteers included Haw Creek Commons, Chances for Children, Grateful Village, Verizon, Beverly Hills Baptist Church, East Asheville United Methodist Church, WNC Conference of the United Methodist Church,

Covenant Community Church, the City of Asheville, St. Luke's Episcopal Church and many others.

With supplies coming in from all over the U.S., efforts occurred to better define and coordinate the needs. This aid came in the form of St. Peter's Episcopal Church (Greer, SC) bringing weekly fresh produce and meats for meals and Outpost Bar & Grill (Bay City, WI) collecting and transporting a semi-trailer and 16' trailer full of supplies that Groce coordinated, not only for East Asheville, but also for Barnardsville and Big Ivy. Supplies ranged from a wood splitter for Barnardsville to pallets of livestock feed to 100s of pounds of frozen meat for meals. Rainbow Express Ministries (Matthews, NC) not only brought targeted supplies but also manpower for the day of their delivery. To recognize and maintain these



BY TRUE MORSE
AND
REV. JILL RHINEHART



relationships, Groce UMC held a volunteer recognition dinner on November 23rd with over 70 people in attendance to celebrate, reconnect and reaffirm the friendships forged by Helene. What had started as an effort to meet basic living needs turned into so much more. Breaking bread together, laboring long hours together, and solving challenges together allowed individuals the opportunity to connect with others who knew and felt the devastation from the storm.

Fellowship, support, and the warm feeling of collectively feeding souls and bellies filled the atmosphere. A community came together and served each other. We held each other, cried on each other's shoulders, and even laughed with each other as we helped each other.

While stories like this abound across WNC, the experience was transformative for so many people who were helped and others who made this

possible at Groce. New relationships were forged that are making and will continue to make a difference for our community. For Groce UMC, the experience underscores the importance of its theme, "A church beyond the walls", and has spurred pursuit of a greater understanding of the needs of the community and how strengthening and building existing and new relationships can best serve those needs.

TL3 Meeting Notes

May 20, 2025

1. **Attendees:** Fred Bailey, Tracey Briggs, Gary Brockway, Phil Crouch, Diane McEntire, Loring McIntyre, True Morse, Rocky Redd, Pam Rogalski Jill Rhinehart, Will Troxell
2. **Absent:** None

LOVING

3. True opened the meeting with a prayer
4. **What are you hearing, thinking and feeling?** The group shared recent experiences they have had at Groce including touring some individuals who have been coming frequently, interaction with the youth group, a family that says this is the right church for them, etc.

LEARNING

5. **3/18 meeting notes were approved via email.**
6. **Financial** – Gary did a review of the 1st quarter financial report using the report issued to the congregation
 - a. Operating budget income and expenses were in good shape for the 1st quarter.
 - b. Diane again questioned what makes up the large summary budget category, “Office”. **ACTION** - Gary to obtain the crosswalk between the detailed budget and the summary categories from Gayle to share with TL3.
 - c. Gary called special attention to the Restricted Funds report.
 - i. The total of all special funds is \$169,482
 - ii. When the Endowment fund amount of \$37,373 is removed since these funds do not reside in Groce’s bank accounts, the Restricted Funds total is \$132,109
 - iii. Since it is important at any given time that Groce is not using Restricted Funds for the operations of the church, the total of Groce’s checking and savings accounts should equal or exceed the total of the Restricted Funds less the endowment. Gary stated that the sum of Groce’s bank accounts was approximately \$132,000 thereby meeting this test. Loring pointed out that optimally there should be more than the total of the Restricted Funds given the routine cash flow needs for Operations expenses (payroll, maintenance, utilities, etc.) but Gary’s comparison shows Groce is on the right track.
 - iv. It was noted that the sinking fund for the potential repayment of the \$30,000 no interest loan from the City for the Epworth apartments needs to be re-established, so Groce is able to pay the City for the Epworth apartments in case the City does not forgive the loan. **ACTION** – Will engage the Epworth Management Team on this topic.
7. **Trustees, Technology & Communications**
 - a. Will did a general update along with building and grounds priorities
 - i. AC units being installed for the Bricks 4 Kidz space who are entering into a full year lease
 - ii. Completed inspection of all electrical panels per insurance and safety requirements
 - iii. Asbury hot water system expansion tank to be replaced
 - iv. Significant updates to website
 - v. Major preventative maintenance completed for all heating and cooling units which is critical to prolong the life of this equipment
 - vi. All staff computers have been upgraded except Jill’s who uses her personal Apple computer
 - vii. Sanctuary multi-media upgrade
 1. Preliminary assessment completed but a number of aspects still need to be considered to strike the right balance between the functionality of the screens and appearance of the sanctuary.
 2. A small group will be established to evaluate the recommended position of the monitors. The recommendation will then be brought to the Trustees for approval.

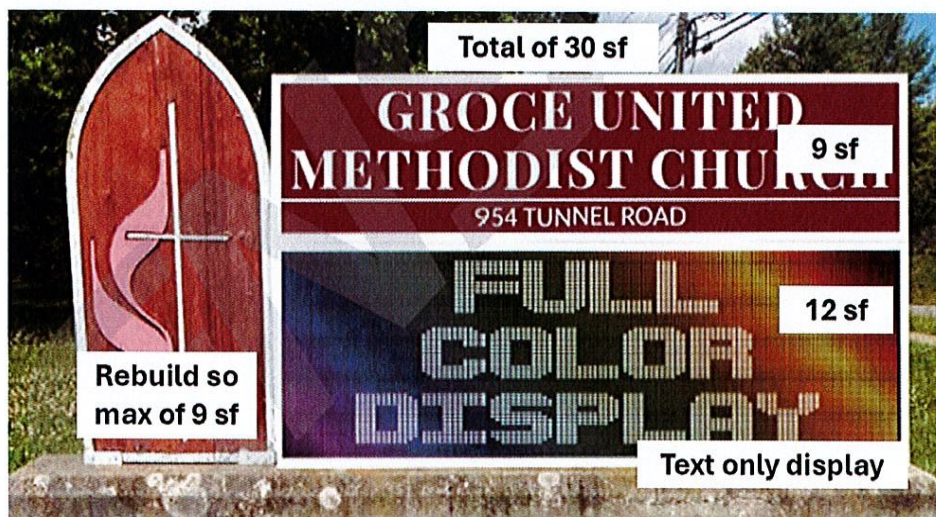
3. Determine choices, sizes of monitors, and the mounting approach (Fred and Will)
 4. Run test scenario to evaluate the interface approach (Fred and Will)
 5. Various members shared recent experiences in various sanctuaries, including very formal settings like Duke and the Washington National Cathedral where screens are installed that not only do not detract from the worship experience but enhance it.
- viii. Priority building efforts and expenditures
1. Repair/replacement of select electrical panels in the sanctuary building - \$8,000
 2. Bricks 4 Kidz - \$10,000 (other spaces in Epworth will not be this expensive)
 3. Hot water expansion tank - \$1,500
 4. Asbury HVAC compressor oil leak - \$5,000
 5. An automatic door release mechanism so fire doors can stay open - \$4,000
- ix. Priority grounds efforts and expenditures
1. Will reviewed other members involved in grounds and facilities work
 - a. Grounds manager – True
 - b. Bus maintenance – Fred
 - c. Storage and space cleanup – Michelle Troxell
 - d. Grading – Loring
 - e. “Handyman” – Bob Briggs
 - f. Parsonage committee, administrative staff and numerous contractors
 2. In a recent meeting Will and True agreed on the top 6 priorities from True’s tracking spreadsheet that contains several dozen items divided into 3 priority categories.
 - a. #1 – Joint sealant at walks on both sides of sanctuary [\$3,000 - water filtration damage]
 - b. #2 – Parking lot crack filling, depressions, and striping [\$8-9,000, asphalt failure, herbicide usage, safety, first impressions]
 - c. #3 – Thorough front parking lot landscape mulching [\$1,500, first impressions, herbicide usage]
 - d. #4 – Playground & Epworth canopy drainage [\$3,200, safety, appearance]
 - e. #5 – Playground safety mulch [\$2,200, safety, appearance]
 - f. #6 – Rework/replace gates on playground fence [safety, appearance]
 - g. Recent grounds accomplishments
 - i. Playground area safety work
 - ii. Governor’s View Road brush control (ongoing)
 - iii. UMM branch debris cleanup from Helene and other Rework/replace gates on playground fence [safety, appearance]
 - iv. Parking lot signs replaced, and posts straightened
 - v. Sidewalk edge ground down at top of Asbury Hall lobby steps due to fall hazard
 - vi. New announcements sign (Thanks Bob Briggs!)
 - vii. Brick 4 Kidz sign installation upgraded
- b. **Review of process with external users of the building and grounds.** Review of external users building use rates and procedures to occur at the June meeting since the policy is about 70% complete so it was a better use of time to review the policy for approval at one meeting instead of discussing at both meetings.
- c. **Defining who exactly are Trustees within the TL3 membership.** It was recognized that the nominating committee has not designated exactly which members of the leadership team (TL3) are actual Trustees, so voting can be done correctly. **ACTION** – Jill to work with the Lay Leadership (Nominating) Committee to clear this up.

8. **Approval of Christmas tree lot usage agreement with Boyd McNeely.** It was unanimously approved to renew with the fee going from \$2000 to \$3000 along with various refinements in the terms such as moving the tree line further from the road so there is more room for the manger.

LEADING

9. **Shaping Our Future “Top 3 Priorities”**

- a. **#1 - Becoming a more multi-generational Family of God**
 - i. Team: Tracey & Bob Briggs, Diane McEntire, True (lead), Lauren Rhein, Jill, Angela Woehl
 - ii. Schedule: 1st meeting 6/10, anticipate 3-4 meetings, early Fall recommendation to TL3 & CHUMs
 - iii. Approach: Review informational resources in the context of Groce (esp. “8 Characteristics of a Vital & Sustainable Congregation” webinars), identify network & collaboration opportunities
 - b. **#2 - Sanctuary multimedia enhancements** (ref Trustees section)
 - c. **#3 - Updated street sign**
 - i. City ordinance information
 1. “Changeable copy” sign allowed for places of worship located in residential zoning districts
 2. Maximum sign area of 30 sf per face (side)
 3. Maximum sign height of 6’
 4. At least 10’ from the property line
 5. Sign message cannot change more than 2x in 24 hours or it is an “electronic messaging board” which are “prohibited” in residential zoning districts and therefore not eligible for a variance
10. The sign contractor indicates high end order of magnitude costs are \$20-22,000. Funding sources are to be determined but will likely include funds from community organizations since we will be able to promote their events in addition to Groce’s.
 11. Preliminary design. True showed a number of examples around the Asheville area.



- a. **ACTION** - True to work with the sign contractor to adjust the design to see how we might achieve the same or similar messaging capacity as the current manual message board (2’-8”H x 8’W with 4 rows of lettering). Review the revised design at the June meeting.

HOUSEKEEPING

12. Next meetings
 - a. June 10 - Multi-generational priority team meeting
 - b. June – Tuesday, 6/17, 6 pm
 - c. July – **No meeting**
 - d. August – Tuesday, 8/19, 6pm

Jill ended the meeting with a prayer



Groce United Methodist Church



Walk up Praise & Prayer



Where: our front lawn under the trees.

When: First Mondays of each month at
10am, beginning June 2nd.

What: Bring a chair or a blanket.

Who: Any & Everyone!



www.groceumc.org

828.298.7647

2025
SUMMER MUSIC CAMP

Rising Kindergarteners
through
rising seventh graders

I am A



DISCOVERING
A LIFE OF
OBEDIENCE

July 14 - 18
10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Groce United Methodist Church

954 Tunnel Rd.
Asheville, NC 28805
828.298.7647
www.veronicab@groceumc.org

Take time each day to pray for members of your church family.



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 AGAPE—9am Worship—10:30am Youth—5pm	2 Prayer Group—11am Beekeepers—7pm	3 Parkin.Group—10am Knitters—10:30am Tai Chi—1:30pm	4 Nurture—4pm Pickleball—6pm AA Meeting—6pm	5 Isaac Group—10:30am Tai Chi—1:30pm Welcome Table—5pm	6 Tailgate Market—3—6pm Hamrick/Schwartz Wedding Rehearsal—5p	7 Hamrick/Schwartz Wedding—5pm
8 Pentecost Sunday AGAPE—9am Worship—10:30am	9 Prayer Group—11am Guitar League—6pm Brownies—6pm	10 Knitters—10:30am Tai Chi—1:30pm Bev. Hills—7pm	11 UMM@VRQ—4pm Pickleball—6pm AA Meeting—6pm	12 Isaac Group—10:30am Tai Chi—1:30pm Welcome Table—5pm	13 Tailgate Market—3—6pm	14
15 Father's Day AGAPE—9am Worship—10:30am	16 Prayer Group—11am	17 Knitters—10:30am Tai Chi—1:30pm TL3—6pm	18 Sarah Circle—10am Table of 16—11:30am Pickleball—6pm AA Meeting—6pm	19 Isaac Group—10:30am Tai Chi—1:30pm Welcome Table—5pm WNCConference	20 Tailgate Market—3—6pm	21
22 AGAPE—9am Worship—10:30am	23 Prayer Group—11am Brownies—6pm	24 Knitters—10:30am Tai Chi—1:30pm	25 BCAE—4pm Pickleball—6pm AA Meeting—6pm	26 Isaac Group—10:30am Tai Chi—1:30pm Welcome Table—5pm	27 Tailgate Market—3—6pm	28 Guitar League—10am
29 AGAPE—9am Worship—10:30am	30 Prayer Group—11am					



Warrior Canine Connection
Mon. - Fri. from 8am to 5pm
*Dates are subject to change.