

The Gazette Summer 2026



Laurel Presbyterian Church
Enter to Worship, Depart to Serve



The Spirit

This summer we have an opportunity to live through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Through the Gospel of John, we get a sense that God is closer than our breath in so many vivid ways. Our triune God made sure that we were equipped to live on as risen ones without the earthly presence of Jesus. In fact, Jesus tells us that he is in us, and we are in him . . . and that he is in the Father and the Father is in him. And now he is sending us an Advocate, the Spirit, to accompany us in our expansive living (John 14). And what is even more surprising is that he tells us we will go on to “even greater things than he did!! (John 14:12).” I wonder how that will manifest in the year ahead. I wonder what exciting things we are going to be about. I wonder

how God is going to move in and through us to love the world.

The gift of the Spirit is also a gift of the Advocate in us. We are not alone. We are not abandoned. God resides in us as real presence. Each of us has been gifted with a sliver of the characteristics of the Trinity as made in the image and likeness of God for the edification of the church. Our joy as the church is to continue the early ministry of Jesus as we tap his inner energy, wisdom and presence to love as he loved us—to love God with all of our hearts, minds and souls and to love our neighbor as ourselves. To share in expanding the table to all people.

Moreover, given that there are so many creative ways the world is substituting “the real” with artificial sweeteners—like AI, photo shop, and even false narratives that confuse us—the engagement with the Holy Spirit is needed now more than ever. As the people of God, we bring a disclosure of love that transcends dogma, politics, and our likes and dislikes as individuals. Love is “the real thing,” and it emanates from within, and we all have access to it. That is “the why” behind being equipped to be the church with presence, and blessed by Jesus, and charged to love what God loves. It is shocking but God’s love is the infrastructure that holds us all together. The invisible glue holding the center. Holding us even when we can’t see God or even acknowledge there is a God. And the grace upon grace is that it includes all of us, and nature, from cicadas to trees, to our birds and fireflies, to stars and the moon, to our own precious cats, and dogs. All creatures. As the people of God, we are empowered and charged with Jesus, and the Spirit, and God the Father, to continue this journey of deep-seated loving.

So, the question for us as we enjoy warmer days of light, chirping birds, and lush greenery, is how might we love through our particular circumstance, through our particular “lives” and reflection of the plurality of God’s image and likeness? How might we be present to each other and to the world in a way that telegraphs that our lives matter because God so loved the world that God created us and fills us with presence? How can we validate the presence of God in each other, so that all are honored?

At the end of the day, it might be as simple as “being with” each other without expectation of fixing anything. Perhaps it is our presence that challenges the very notion that we are not abandoned to living our lives by ourselves. When we join with each other, we co-participate with God to bring about the new heavens and the new earth. Together through the Spirit we are bound together in a covenant of love to meet all that is with love—the whirly ups and downs of being human in a messy world.

God has equipped us with Love, and it is the best antidote to hate, to disconnection, to the doubts that false narratives seed. The truth of the matter is that we are created by God with Love and we are blessed and called “very good” before we begin to respond and register that piece of good news. The church has the joyful task of embodying this good news for

all people. We have something the world doesn't even know it needs right now. That's key. And we have impact by just trying to love the person or the creature right in front of us. The grace? The Spirit is at work through us and will show us the way. Let's trust that we have not been abandoned to our smaller agendas but swept up in God's vast love for all. What a joy it is to be part of this communion with all the saints.

¹⁸ "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. ²⁰ On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you." John 14: 18-20, *NRSV updated edition*.

¹² Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father." John 14: 12, *NRSV updated edition*.

Reverend Dr. Ann D. Cherry



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS
AND FRIENDS OF LAUREL!**

JUNE

Pete MacRae (1)
Chris Berger (3)
Michael Henderson (7)
Joan McArthur (8)
Nana Sarfo-Kantanka (10)
Linda Coulson (17)
Robin Jones (30)

JULY

Sharon Riley (2)
Mary Scearce (6)
Bud Jones (6)
Sara Bailey MacRae (9)
Katherine Cooper (12)
Reggie Fitch (13)
Bonnie Poff (13)
Steve Scearce (22)
Marcia Deisher (25)
Trish Stratton (25)
Jake Anderson (29)
Carl Carpenter (31)

AUGUST

Peter Coulson (1)
Kathy Horigan (4)
Reverend Ann Cherry (5)
Rebecca Owen (7)
Laurel Roeder (9)
Matt Cross (11)
Emily Berger (15)
Mary Jane Bowlin (16)
Roy Shore (18)
Linda Maddy (22)
Lorraine Duff (25)
Susan Dameron (25)
Melanie Scearce (27)
Meghan McBane (28)
Maureen Anderson (30)

Laurel Summer Shepherds on Call:

June:

Mary Jane Bowlin
804-672-6009

July:

Barbara Rose
804-270- 6978

August:

Carolyn Stinger
804-755-7150

If you know of someone who could use some extra love with a phone call or visit, please contact the appropriate Shepherd on Call.



JUNE SANCTUARY FLOWERS

June 7-Miller/Roeder families-To the Glory of God and in memory of Joe and Nancy Miller

June 14-Paige Nobles

June 21-Open

June 28- Open

JULY SANCTUARY FLOWERS

July 5- Michael Henderson

July 12-Open

July 19-Open

July 26- Karen Johnson-To the Glory of God and in honor of Carl Carpenter on his birthday July 31.

AUGUST SANCTUARY FLOWERS

August 2-Open

August 9- Glenda Miller-To the Glory of God and in honor of Laurel Roeder's birthday.

August 16-Open

August 23-Open

August 30-Open



LAMB'S BASKET

Please bring in boxed or canned items, and snacks to refill our Lambs basket. There is a donation box in the narthex. Thank you.

GRATITUDE TO ALL OF YOU SERVING THE CHURCH

We could not speak Laurel Love if it were not for your commitment, grace, and generosity in sharing your gifts. You are the infrastructure that makes us a church. On Pentecost we talked about receiving the Holy Spirit for the building up of the people of God to be the church in the world. The plurality of all of our voices and our efforts are the starting points for our reflection of God's image and likeness in the world. All of us, and I mean, all of us are needed to mirror the vastness of our God. "For God so loved the world" that God gave us each other and creation to love and steward so we might savor and shepherd the "new heavens and new earth" that God is bringing alive through each and every one of us. Thank you for your commitment to this Body of Christ as our particular expression of God's love in the world. We could not do that without each of us adding our two cents as you all do— and as hard as it is to do. Because it is our work as the church to listen, learn and grow in the Spirit together which is what Pentecost embraces at its core. We live out the "why" God so loved the world in our commitment to being present as God's instruments of peace in this time and place. What a gift it is to serve in this way!

GRATITUDE FOR THE STEADY PRESENCE OF LAUREL LOVE

Thank you to Carolyn Stinger for her copy editing, Billy Shepherd for tending to our church sign, Mary Scearce, Beverley Shepherd and Carolyn for our printing, Brenda and Pete MacRae, for serving as our newsletter editors, Brenda MacRae, our website master, and Tod Balsbaugh, Marshall Chamberlayne, Wayne Alvis and Pete MacRae for tending to our building and grounds.

LINDA MADDY, NEW LAMB'S BASKET CAPTAIN

The Member Care and Missions Team have appointed Linda Maddy to serve as our new Captain for the Lamb's Basket ministry. Linda has a huge heart for local missions and a huge heart to carry on the work of her dear friend, Linda Patterson. She will be coordinating our human

capital and generous food donations to this important local ministry.



Join us on Sunday June 14th in the fellowship hall for tacos after worship service. All are welcome. There is a signup sheet on the church bulletin board in the hallway.

FROM THE EDITOR:

After 11 years of being the editor of our monthly newsletter, The Gazette, I have decided to step down. It has been an honor and privilege to serve the Laurel Church community in this way, and I have enjoyed it immensely.

I'd like to thank several people for their support over the years; Mary Scearce, who helped me in the beginning with printing, collating, and mailing the newsletter. And then, during the pandemic, and after, my husband, Pete, who also helped with those tasks, but more importantly, helped me resolve all of the technical challenges I had with the computer, including many late-night mishaps. And to all the many members/friends who gave me information to load into the Gazette each month to keep our church members informed of news. I am truly grateful.

Last but not least, a big thank you to all who sent emails, cards, and letters in appreciation of receiving the newsletter each month. That touched my heart.

Brenda MacRae



SOUND BOOTH NEED + TRAINING!

The WE (Worship and Education) Team is asking for our help to recruit and equip more people with sound booth skills. It takes two people to stream the worship service each week. The vision is to set up a schedule so no one team is burdened with this important responsibility which sustains our connection with those who can't get to church. If this interests you, please speak to Thomas Miller (WE co-chair with Julie Messick), Rudy Van't Riet, Bernie Cheatman, or Steve Scearce. It is not as intimidating as it might look.

WEBSITE MASTER NEEDED

We are looking for someone to keep our website current with our programs, worship bulletins, and weekly announcements. To fill this role, you would need a home computer and time to stay on top of this weekly. Brenda MacRae has done an outstanding job and can help get you up to speed. Training will be provided. We use Word Press. See Ann Cherry if interested.



BEING THE CHURCH STARTS AT HOME: SERVE LOCALLY...

Have a heart for making a difference? Think about these opportunities and ask God if this might be an effective way to have an impact at Laurel.

WHAT WE LOVE BEST ABOUT GOD

On Sunday, May 31st, we will be singing a hymn composed by the Session from our annual retreat (stanza 1) **and the** participants of the Lenting with Love Series (stanzas 2-4) this March to the melody of *A Mighty Fortress is our God*, arranged by Martin Luther. Stanza 1 reflects, "What we love best about God". Stanza 2 captures "What we love best about who we are in God." Stanza 3 reflects, "What we love best about God in Laurel." Stanza 4 reflects, "What we love best about God in the world." Stanzas 2-4 were composed by the participants in the Lenting in Love Series this March. This hymn came out of Dr. Ann's doctoral work. (See attached page 6 for hymn).

THANK YOU FOR THE DOCTORAL LOVE

How did I get so lucky to serve God at Laurel? To be part of your life? To be part of the great love experiment to approximate trying to speak God's love together. I am speechless. Thank you for the outpouring of congratulations and love for my work through the years (some who are now part of the larger pool of all the saints) that was recognized on Sunday. I was deeply touched. The paper titled "A Sampling of How Incarnational Love Can Be Lived in the Local Church." is to be published in 2027. It is dedicated to all of you. Thank you for welcoming my ministry and for the pure joy and honor of walking this journey together as we reflect God's vast love for each other and speak it in all its plurality as Laurel Love. You have taught me so much about how to "be love" in the trenches and I have been touched by your grace for all the ways I have stumbled trying to be your minister. Thank you for saying "yes" to God, to Laurel and to my ministry. My heart is full.

"My work is dedicated to the creative, kindhearted, and vibrant congregation of Laurel Presbyterian Church who are a living template of their love of God. It is also dedicated to God who continues to woo, surprise and delight me."

Reverend Dr. Ann

THIS WILL BE THE LAST EDITION OF THE LAUREL GAZETTE

The Session voted at its May meeting to discontinue the monthly newsletter because we have multiple ways of communicating with our members and through our website. That said, we know some of you do not receive the emails and we will endeavor to make sure you are kept up to date. Gratitude to Brenda and Pete MacRae who have been our newsletter editors for 11 years. Their generous gift of time, effort, creativity, herding cats for articles, printing and mailing have been deeply appreciated. Thank you to the MacRae's!

BULLETIN BEST GUIDE FOR CHURCH WEEKLY EVENTS

Please continue to check the weekly bulletin for programming notes. There is a lot going on at our church and the weekly bulletin is the most current guide for our small groups and events. We don't want you to miss a thing. Your presence is what brings us most alive.

MEMBER CARE AND MISSION MINUTES MAY 3, 2026

Members' concerns were discussed.

Remember to bring food items for Lamb's Basket.

Coal Pit dinner on hold for now.

Michael Whitby graduated from Virginia Tech on May 15th. Will talk with Reverend Ann about a monetary gift from the church.

Continue bringing food items for Lamb's Basket in memory of Linda Patterson and in honor of Woody.

A taco lunch is planned for June 14th right after worship. A sign-up sheet will be posted on the church bulletin board.

Safe Harbor collection is on hold for now.

Rebecca nominated Linda Maddy to serve as Laurel's representative to Lamb's Basket. All approved.

Gladys Chamberlayne

STEWARDSHIP & PROPERTY TEAM MEETING MINUTES May 3, 2026

New Business

The Henrico County Fire Marshall contacted a bi-annual fire inspection and we passed.

The session has approved increasing Donna's wages by \$50 per month from \$400 to \$450.

We have had three vendors inspect our chimney. We have cracked tiles and the preliminary price estimates are in the \$6,000 range.

We will have to replace the bottom section of one of the windows in the fellowship hall. We will get a price quote from BMW and at least one other.

Rudy brought to the attention of the team that someone had been tampering with the wiring in the sound booth. We will monitor this situation. Tod will contact the Bethel church to see if they know anything about this issue.

The issue of mowing the grass was discussed. Pete, Glenda, Fran and Marshall mowed the grass last year and indicated they will do it again this year. Tod volunteered to substitute, if needed

Ann noted there was an issue on the ledge below the stained-glass windows in the sanctuary. Marshall will check it out.

Old Business

Tod spoke with Stephanie about finalizing the Gingerbread agreement. She noted that she had a number of issues on her plate and apologized for not finalizing the agreement.

Tod Balsbaugh

WORSHIP AND EDUCATION MINUTES May 10, 2026

Upcoming services and support:

Pentecost 5/24, decorate sanctuary w/ red balloons, rose petals, wear red.

Start thinking about outdoor service times.

Technology discussion:

What actions can we take to improve setup or make helping out more approachable?

Print out step-by-step instructions with visuals.

Upload services on the website - Ann Whitby currently owns.

Shadow system where folks can learn without pressure of making mistakes.

Projector set-up

ICC license before doing any sort of movie nights.

Could we run the projector using Wi-Fi? Buying a new Wi-Fi-enabled projector could also be an option - to chat w/ VTF.

Upcoming Sunday School plans:

Checking in on previously discussed ideas
Michael still interested in his idea around "The Chosen"

and the creative liberties taken and why.

Lord's Prayer study, Seven Deadly Sins study, 1 John, James, Minor Prophets, other religions, and compare/contrast,

Anything that would go well with Ann's upcoming sermons or service plans?

Suggestion box like VTF?

Closed with prayer.

Thomas Miller



SUMMER LITURGIST SCHEDULE

JUNE 2026

6/7 Gladys Chamberlayne-Communion

6/14 Beverley Shepherd- Reverend Dr. Gench preaching/ Ann officiating a wedding.

6/21 Rebecca Owen

6/28 Mary Searce

JULY 2026

7/5 Gladys Chamberlayne-July 4th Weekend

Communion

7/12 Beverley Shepherd

7/19 Rebecca Owen

7/26 Mary Searce

AUGUST 2026

8/2 Gladys Chamberlayne-Communion

8/9 Carol Cummins

8/16 Joan McArthur

8/23 Mary Searce

8/30 Beverley Shepherd

SEPTEMBER 2026

9/6 Gladys Chamberlayne-Labor Day/ Ann officiating wedding

9/13-Julie Messick-Communion

9/20 Rebecca Owen

9/27 Mary Searce

What We Love Best About God¹—Composed by Laurel Presbyterian Church

Stanza 1, Created by the Session of LPC, March 7, 2026, “What we love best about God.”

A Mighty Lover is our God
A helper never failing
A listener of our needs and wants
our comfort when we're ailing.

Connect our valued hope
upholds us when we mope
whose friendship does create
pure love instead of hate
rejoice in God forever!

Stanza 2, Created by Lenting in Love Series Participants of LPC, March 8, 2026, “What we love best about who we are in God.”

Because God is our trusted friend
We have compassion without end
great is our hope and inspiration
present in all of creation
Great joy and patience too

All loving within you
living with integrity
joy through eternity
kind and forgiving we all are.

Stanza 3, Created by Lenting in Love Series Participants of LPC, March 22, 2026, “What we love best about God in Laurel.”

Laurel is a family filled with love
A very generous compassionate group
A people with a loving heart
whose warmth and willing spirit show

Connect our beloved folks
to a church that's filled with hope
whose friendship welcomes all
whose outreach meets us all
A fellowship for-ever.


Stanza 4, Created by Lenting in Love Series Participants of LPC, March 29, 2026, “What we love best about God in the world.”

A constant presence in our world
God brings us light and beauty.
All flowers and birds and all the trees
the sky, the wind, the land and seas

Christ's love is reaching out—
with hands and hearts to heal
bringing food and clothes and hope
to a strife-filled world in need
God's love is never failing.

¹Laurel Presbyterian Church, Lent 2026. Stanza 1 composed by the Session, stanzas 2-4 by the participants in the Lenting in Love Series. Melody, Luther, Martin. "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God." In *Glory to God: A Presbyterian Hymnal*, edited by Mary Louise Bringle, et al., 275. Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 201 in the Appendix

FIRST LAUREL NEWSLETTER
(CIRCA 1969)




THE LAUREL

GAZETTE



CHURCH
AND
FAMILY
NEWS



COMPILED
BY
LADIES
OF THE
CHURCH



c. 19.26

DEADLINE FOR GAZETTE – 19th OF EACH MONTH

Laurel Presbyterian Church
9675 Staples Mill Road
Glen Allen, VA 23060

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