

What does God require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. — Micah 6:8

A Christmas Message for All Times

“In a time when we are fighting the powers and principalities of systemic racism, for me, worship is not optional.”

- Donna Battle

This quote from my colleague, Rev. Dr. Donna Battle, Chaplain at Meredith College, caught my attention as I savored the eggs I was eating over our breakfast meeting at The Flying Biscuit and trying to resist the fluffy biscuit taunting me on the plate in front of me. Rev. Battle and I were discussing Pullen’s

engagement in beginning a congregational conversation on racial equity. I had reached out to her as a thought partner on my own thinking and discernment about my pastoral leadership around engaging our church in conversation on race and racial equity.

In full transparency, I must confess I feel a bit lost and uncertain about how to help our community engage in doing the deep work we, as a predominately white congregation, need to do around race and racial equity. I use the word “need” because I do believe it is a need. But I also believe it is our most faithful response to these times in which we are being called to live as people of faith, and specifically as Christians. It is a “need” that I am feeling called to respond to. It is a “need” that I want to respond to. AND, it is my desire to be thoughtful and intentional in how I and we go about talking to one another about white fragility, white supremacy, white privilege, race, racism, racial reconciliation, racial healing, and racial equity—all words and constructs and experiences that carry deep wounds and emotions.

I am painfully aware of how ill-equipped and unaware I feel in conversations on race and racism and white fragility, and all those other words that are important in this conversation. I am like every other liberal white person who wants to do and say the right thing but who also knows that my internal biases from being raised white in the South are always lurking in the shadows. The fear of saying something wrong or that offends or is insensitive to brown and black people is paralyzing at times. There are days when I wish I could go away somewhere, educate myself on all these issues, and then come back and engage in the conversation. That way I don’t embarrass myself or cause more hurt to anyone else. If only the world worked that way. But it doesn’t. So what are my other options?

Here is what I heard my colleague saying to me over eggs and biscuits. The first thing we must do is pray for discernment. We cannot face these powers and principalities on our own—and the power of racism and racial inequity are deeply rooted and entrenched in every system and institution in America. As a church, as a faith community, our spiritual grounding is what will hold us together as we discern and move through the work we are being called to at

this time in history. Second, I heard my colleague saying clearly that worship cannot be seen as optional. Worship is the glue that holds us together; and our strength and wisdom will come to us as a community, as God’s people, when we offer ourselves in worship before God. And last, we must let go of our idea of perfection that leads to self-idolatry. This fantasy that if I could just go away and educate myself and come back and be perfect in the conversation is a kind of self-idolatry. God’s work, the work of the spirit, the work of the church is always done in and through relationship. God’s work, the work of the spirit, the work of the church is always done by embracing the gift of our humanity, and the gift of forgiveness, and the gift of redemption, and the gift of second chances.

The Deacons and leadership of our church have made a commitment for 2020 to engage our congregation in conversation around race and racial equity. We have already begun that conversation as our associate pastor, Chalice, put together a powerful Wednesday night series in November on race and racial equity. There is no way to know now where these conversations will lead us and what they will require of us. But this I believe, if we can join one another in grounding ourselves spiritually through prayer and discernment, if we can make it our priority to encourage one another by being present to worship together, and if we can let go of our own self-idolatry—our need for perfection—there is no doubt in my mind that the Spirit of God will fall fresh upon us and we will continue to be a light in the midst of darkness.

In this season of Advent we are asked to “prepare the way” for the coming of the Christ-child—the coming of light, hope, peace, joy, and love. My Advent prayer for our church is that we will “prepare the way” to have honest and loving conversations in 2020 around race and racial equity and where our church is being called to give witness to God’s radical and inclusive love in the world for ALL God’s people. God made flesh in all people is, for me, the Christmas message for these times and for all times. *- Nancy E. Petty*



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We grieve with:

- ☞ Gerald Smith in the death of his wife, Lynda on November 17. A memorial service will be held at Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church in Willow Spring on December 28 @ 11am.
- ☞ Rachel Banyal in the death of her mother, Linda Harden, in Burrell, PA on November 11.
- ☞ Kevin, Shannon, Porter and Quinn Neiley in the death of Kevin's mom, and Porter and Quinn's grandmother, Lynn Harmon, on December 2. A memorial service will be held in Poteat Chapel on December 15 at 2pm.

We celebrate with:

- ☞ Jessica and Mark Werdel in the birth of their son, Robin Frances Werdel, on October 31.
- ☞ Jim Zupancic and Chris Whitaker in the birth of their son, Xavier Whitaker Zupancic, on December 4.
- ☞ Judy Williams in her retirement from Wake County Public Schools as a school counselor.
- ☞ Cheryl Stallings in her election to the Apex Town Council.

Pullen Women's Group - December 9

The next get together for the Pullen Women's Group is Monday, Dec 9, at 6:30 pm at Anise Pho at 222 Glenwood Ave. All women are invited to enjoy casual conversations. TEXT Rita at 919-360-0975 so we know how big of a table to reserve. We hope to see you there!
-Rita Rakestraw

LGBTQ Second Sunday Lunch— Today!

Please join us immediately following worship on December 8 for LGBTQ Second Sunday Lunch at El Cerro Restaurant at 2217 Avent Ferry Road. Parking is plentiful. I hope to see you there!
- Randall Brady



Coffee Drive! Please donate ground coffee

From December 1-22 help "fill up the cups". Look for donation bins by the Pullen doors!

The coffee collection is part of a greater initiative by the Interfaith Homelessness Education, Action, and Response Network to collect needed items for Oak City Cares. Oak City Cares is a services hub for connecting individuals and families at risk of, or currently experiencing, homelessness to coordinated services that create a path to stable housing and renewed hope. **The coffee will be delivered to Oak City Cares on December 23rd.**
-Brian Crisp

Baby Items Needed for Nicaragua



Pullen Mission Women (PMW) and a team of volunteers will be preparing 130 baby "layettes" for AMOS, our partner in Nicaragua. Layettes for Nicaragua and Wake County are PMW's designated mission of giving for December, in honor of baby Jesus. AMOS provides these bundles of baby items to new mothers as an incentive to receive prenatal care. We need your help to gather new or gently used baby sleepers (size 0-6 months), baby onesies (size 6-12 months), and baby blankets. Please leave donations in the labeled bin outside Finlator by Sunday January 26.

Questions? elizabethwkasper@gmail.com -*Elizabeth Kasper*

Want to Know More About Pullen?

Pullen 101, the eight-week introduction to our church, will begin again on Sunday, January 6 at 9:30 a.m. in Room 203 next to the sanctuary. All are welcome to join us during the Sunday Group hour for this orientation to the life and ministries of Pullen. For more information or to let us know you plan to attend, contact Chalice Overy at covery@pullen.org or 919-828-0897x214. -*Chalice Overy*

Needed for Round Table Ministry

This Advent season is a good time to thank everyone who has contributed items for the Round Table Ministry over the past year. Your generosity has been greatly appreciated, both by our Round Table guests as well as the volunteers who work in this ministry. Unfortunately, the need continues. The following items are needed for the snack bags as well as the Tuesday/Thursday meals: cans of Vienna sausages, cereal/granola bars, 4 or 6-pack crackers of any variety, cans of tuna, and cans of chicken. If you can help, please leave your donations in the blue wagon outside the church office or drop them off with the back door volunteers on Sunday mornings. **THANK YOU!!**
-Nancy Bradley

Year-End Giving at Pullen

Pullen's fiscal year ends on December 31 so any contributions for 2019 or prepayments for 2020 must be dated on or before 12/31/2019, and be received or post-marked by that day to be credited to the 2019 fiscal year. Questions about year-end contributions, stock gifts or electronic giving can be directed to Brooks Wicker.
- Finance Committee

Pullen Building Tour, Dec 8, 9:30 AM

Visitors and new members are invited to join Pat Hielscher for a thorough tour of our building. We will gather at 9:30 a.m. in Finlator Hall.
-Pat Hielscher

Get involved!



Will You Help Pullen Grow in 2020?

We here at Pullen have much to be grateful for, and at the top of that list are the many people who support this church financially.

Their donations help keep the sanctuary toasty in winter and cool in summer. They make it possible for us to provide vital aid to our sister churches and faith partners here in the U.S. and overseas. This support allows us to feed hundreds of hungry people every week, and it enables us to provide our staff with competitive wages and health insurance.

I'd like to thank everyone who has given in the past and those who have already pledged to support the 2020 budget. Please take a moment to fill out one of the blue pledge cards found in the pew racks and place it in the offering plate. You can also visit the church website pullen.org/pledge to make your pledge.

We also invite you to help us create a quilt to symbolize the diverse gifts that you bring to our church community. We ask you to bring a 2 1/2-inch wide strip of fabric, of any length, to turn in with your pledge card. These pieces will come together throughout the pledging season to create a beautiful representation of our love and support of this church.

-Amber Keister, Stewardship Committee

2020 Budget Pledging

2020 Budget: \$1,177,045
Pledged to Date: \$ 626,560
Percent Pledged: 53%

Church Financials

Gifts to Date: \$1,001,485.36
Expenses: \$1,043,231.62
Difference: (\$ 41,746.26)

As of 11/30/19

Earth Ministry Challenge

Gift ideas with Low Environmental Impact for Kids:

- Experiences vs. possessions, such as: vacations, extracurricular activities, museum memberships, and tickets to events.
- Family time: a tent and camping gear, board games, kids printed coupons.
- Education: a subscription to educational or craft subscription boxes, gardening kits, science kits, cooking classes, magazines, or bookstore gift cards.

Gift ideas with Low Environmental Impact for Adults:

- Research the impact of your gift ideas; consider Fair Trade gifts.
- Choose gifts that are natural rather than synthetic; reusable instead of disposable; experiences rather than goods; homemade rather than bought.
- Give certificates for a promise to babysit, wash the dishes, or clean the house or car.
- Agree to make donations to favorite charities instead of exchanging gifts.

Gift Wrapping and Cards

- Gift wrap and cards may be festive but at a huge cost to the environment. If every family wrapped just three gifts in reused materials, it would save enough paper to cover 45,000 football fields, and if we each send one less card this year, we will save 50,000 cubic yards of paper. (Stanford Univ)
- Use reusable fabric or paper gift bags. Wrap gifts in pages from magazines, the Sunday comics or maps. Use cloth ribbon so it can be reused. Save and reuse wrapping paper and ribbon. Buy wrapping paper and cards made from recycled paper. Send electronic cards or make a holiday phone call instead. Make gift labels from used cards.

Decorating

- Purchase durable, reusable decorations rather than flimsy disposable ones. Use LED or solar lights. Set electric lights on a timer so they are only on a few hours each evening.
- Buy a live tree to plant after Christmas, or compost a live cut tree to avoid placing it in the trash. Artificial trees may be a good long term investment as an alternative.
- Compost poinsettias after the holidays.

Please visit our page at pullen.org/earthministry for links!

Christmas Eve Offering for Rise Against Hunger

Each Christmas Eve we take a special offering for a ministry that addresses poverty either in our community or beyond. This year our offering will again go to Rise Against Hunger (formerly known as Stop Hunger Now). RAG is an international hunger relief organization that coordinates the distribution of food and other life-saving aid around the world. The organization is driven by a vision to end world hunger in our lifetime. Its mission is to provide food and life-saving aid to the world's most destitute and hungry in the most sustainable, efficient and effective manner. Its office is located a few blocks east on Hillsborough Street. Rise Against Hunger raises funds for the packaging of meals by requesting donations from the volunteers who do the packaging. For the last five summers, RAG has brought their mobile meal packaging unit to Pullen for our July Second Wednesday program. Each time about 75 Pullen children, youth and adults had a great time packaging meals. The required donation for this project is a minimum of \$2,900 and the funds come primarily from the previous Christmas Eve offering. This event is a wonderful intergenerational activity since people of all ages can do one or more of the required tasks. This means all generous donations on December 24 will have a double benefit: hungry people in a developing country get the nutritious meals their bodies need and Pullen people here in Raleigh experience the joy of working together to provide them. *-Missions and Outreach Council*



Worship with us this Advent Season at Pullen!

ADVENT AGENDA



December 11: Lunch and Carol Sing

11:30AM, Finlator

O come, all ye faithful Pullen elders and friends. There's a song in the air as we look forward to a very special lunch and carol sing on Wednesday, December 11 at 11:30 a.m. How great our joy will be as we rejoice with heart and soul and voice!

Please contact Chalice Overy at covevery@pullen.org or call the church office if you plan to attend. - *Chalice Overy*

December 24: Christmas Eve Service

7:00PM, Sanctuary

Each Christmas Eve we gather together in the sanctuary. The Pullen children will reenact the Nativity. Join in singing congregational Christmas carols and hear the Chancel Choir as they perform "Gloria" by Vivaldi. We will also have a guest soloist perform "O Holy Night" and Janice will play Christmas music on the pipe organ. Please bring your family to this special service!

December 15: Christmas Breakfast

9:00AM, Finlator

Christmas breakfast has become a beloved holiday tradition featuring a potluck breakfast, the dramatized and competitive singing of the The Twelve Days of Christmas, and the children's Christmas play. Mark your calendar for Sunday, December 15 at 9 a.m., and meet us in Finlator Hall. If you have family in town for the holidays, be sure to bring them and a breakfast dish to share. Most importantly, bring your Christmas spirit!

- *Chalice Overy*

This year our Christmas Eve offering will again go to Rise Against Hunger. It's mission of this international relief organization is to provide food and life-saving aid to the world's most destitute and hungry in the most sustainable, efficient and effective manner. The RAG office is located a few blocks east on Hillsborough Street.

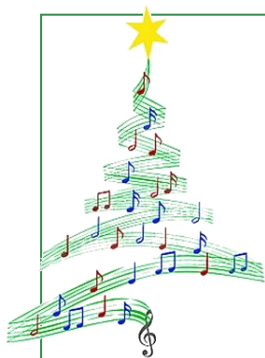
- *Brian Crisp*



December 24: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

11:00PM, Finlator

Welcome Christmas Day with your Pullen family. Join us on Christmas Eve for a time of fellowship and a candlelight communion service. We will serve hot cider and Christmas cookies in Finlator Hall from 11:00-11:25 p.m. We will then move to the Sanctuary for a candlelight communion service from 11:30-12:00. - *Bryan Lee*



December 15: A Service of Global Christmas Music "We Will Climb a Mountain"

11:00AM, Sanctuary

led by the **Pullen Chancel Choir** with **Classical Guitarist, Willem Lutter, Native American Flutist,**

Ruth Pardue, Oboist, Jim McMahan, Organist, Janice Hocutt, Percussionists, Sawyer Harris & Ted Buckner, and Vocal Soloist, Jennifer Paschal.

Join us to express the meaning of Christmas through the voices and experiences of the world's peoples.

"In days to come...all nations shall stream to the mountain" - Isaiah 2:2

Advent Yoga

Julie Gilbert Yoga is offering a four week yoga series to allow you to be still and listen in the Advent season. Classes will be held around the beautiful labyrinth in the chapel. Each class will consist of a brief advent meditation followed by an all level flow and the progressive lighting of each candle in the Advent Wreath. All faiths are welcome.

December 2, 9, 16 and 23

9am-10:15AM

Suggested donation is \$15.00 a week (not required)

Pay what you can or wish, and that may be nothing. All are welcome. Bring your own mat or use the ones I provide. I will have blocks and straps.



- *Julie Gilbert*

December 18: Moravian Lovefeast

The entire Pullen family will join in our annual Pullen version of the historic Moravian Lovefeast. This tradition reminds us that it's often the simple things that make the season bright and meaningful--singing carols, sharing a simple "meal", and acknowledging God's presence with us. Dinner will be served in Finlator at the regular time, and we'll transition to the sanctuary at 6:30 for the Lovefeast featuring sweet rolls and chocolate milk!

Pullen Memorial Baptist Church

DECEMBER 2019

| sunday | monday | tuesday | wednesday | thursday | friday | saturday |
|---|--|---|--|---|-----------|---|
| <p>1 First Sunday of Advent—Hope</p> <p>11:00AM Worship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Congregational Advent Hymns ▮ Chancel Choir <p>Anthem: "Gloria" by Vivaldi.</p> | <p>2</p> <p>9-10:15AM, Advent Yoga, Chapel</p>  | <p>3</p> <p>2:00PM, Round Table Fellowship, Finlator</p> <p>6:30PM, Theology on Tap, Transfer Co.</p> | <p>4 5:15PM Dinner</p> <p>6:30PM Advent Candlelight Service, Chapel</p> <p>6:00PM Children's Choir</p> <p>6:30PM Music Discovery</p> <p>6:45PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>5</p> <p>2:00PM, Round Table Fellowship, Finlator</p> | <p>6</p> | <p>7</p> <p>11:30AM-4:00PM, Parent's Day Out, Finlator</p> <p>lunch and activities for the kids while parents shop!</p>  |
| <p>8 Second Sunday of Advent—Peace</p> <p>11:00AM Worship:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Pullen Orchestra ▮ Isaiah's "Peaceable Kingdom" sung by Children's Choir ▮ Advent singing of "The Dream Isaiah Saw" by Rudolph. | <p>9</p> <p>9-10:15AM, Advent Yoga, Chapel</p> | <p>10</p> <p>2:00PM, Round Table Fellowship,</p> <p>6:30PM, Theology on Tap, Transfer Co.</p> | <p>11 11:30AM Pullen Elders: Lunch and Carol Sing</p> <p>5:15AM Dinner</p> <p>6:30PM Programs</p> <p>6:00PM Children's Choir</p> <p>6:30PM Music Discovery Group, room 122</p> <p>6:45PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal</p> | <p>12</p> <p>2:00PM, Round Table Fellowship, Finlator</p> | <p>13</p> | <p>14</p> <p>10:00AM, Children's Christmas Play Practice, Finlator</p> |
| <p>15 Third Sunday of Advent—Joy</p> <p>9:00AM Christmas Potluck Breakfast, Children's Play-Finlator</p> <p>11:00AM Worship:</p> <p>A Service of Global Christmas Music "We Will Climb a Mountain"</p> | <p>16</p> <p>9-10:15AM, Advent Yoga, Chapel</p> | <p>17</p> <p>2:00PM, Round Table Fellowship,</p> <p>6:30PM, Theology on Tap, Transfer</p> | <p>18</p> <p>5:15PM Dinner</p> <p>5:15PM Orchestra Rehearsal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Children's Choir <p>6:30-7:30PM, Pullen's Christmas LoveFeast, Sanctuary</p> | <p>19</p> <p>2:00PM, Round Table Fellowship, Finlator</p> | <p>20</p> | <p>21</p> |
| <p>22 Fourth Sunday of Advent—Love</p> <p>No Sunday Groups</p> <p>11:00AM Worship includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Pullen Orchestra ▮ Festive Chancel Choir ; Organ <p>Anthem: Gloria in Excelsis Deo-Cobb</p> | <p>23</p> <p>9-10:15AM, Advent Yoga, Chapel</p> | <p>24 Christmas Eve</p> <p>7:00PM Worship</p> <p>Includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▮ Congregational Christmas Carols ▮ Chancel Choir: "Gloria" by Vivaldi ▮ Solo: "O Holy Night" <p>11:00PM Candlelight Service</p> | <p>25 Christmas Day</p>  <p>----- Church Office Closed -----</p> | <p>26</p> | <p>27</p> | <p>28</p> |
| <p>29 No Sunday Groups</p> <p>11AM Worship</p> <p>12:15AM Chronologically Advantaged Potluck Lunch, Finlator</p> | <p>30</p> | <p>31</p> | <p>1 New Year's Day</p>  <p>Church Office Closed</p> | <p>2</p> | <p>3</p> | <p>4</p> |

Advent Gift Cards



Support Our International Mission Partners

As you make plans for Christmas gift-giving, please remember our Advent Mission Offering. Once again our offering will go to places around the world where your contributions can make a big difference. Simple gift cards are available to use in notifying loved ones of gifts to our partners in their honor. The cards are available on the tables next to the entrances to Room 203 and in the Information Room.

Our partners will be grateful for your help in supporting their important ministries. The offering will be received each Sunday in Advent. **Offering envelopes can be found in the pew racks.** Receipts not otherwise designated on the offering envelope will be divided equally among the following recipients:

◆ **First Baptist Church, Matanzas, Cuba**

For nearly 30 years, we have deepened our relationships with our partner congregation in Cuba as Pullen adults and youth travel to Matanzas several times a year. This share of the Advent offering will support the many efforts of our Cuban friends at First Baptist, Matanzas, to meet the basic needs of their neighbors.

◆ **Peace Cathedral, Tbilisi, Republic of Georgia**

Our friends in the Republic of Georgia will benefit from your contributions as they try to minister to the needs of the people in Tbilisi. In the face of political challenges and great human need, Bishop Malkhaz Songulashvili and members of Peace Cathedral persevere to offer vital ministry in challenging times.

◆ **AMOS Health and Hope, Managua, Nicaragua**

ABC medical missionaries Laura and David Parajon oversee this creative indigenous health delivery system in rural villages of Nicaragua by training local health promoters to provide basic screenings, services, and education for their neighbors. AMOS celebrates its 10th anniversary this month.

◆ **Community of the Cross of Nails, Coventry, England**

The Community of the Cross of Nails is Pullen's oldest international partner. This reconciliation network grew from the rubble left when Coventry Cathedral was bombed during World War II and the Cathedral community responded with a spirit of reconciliation. Peace-making partners all over the world benefit from gifts to this important ministry.

◆ **The Zimbabwe Theological Seminary, Gueru, Zimbabwe**

Our gifts to the Zimbabwe Theological Seminary will help this new institution meet its basic needs for faculty and facilities to train men and women who sense a call to ministry in their troubled country.

-Brian Crisp

Children's Advent Schedule:

December 8

9:30 AM Children's Sunday Group Advent Lessons
11 AM Worship—Children, assisted by families, will put chrismons on the Christmas Tree at the beginning of the service. Children's Choir (3rd—5th Grade) will sing during worship
12:15—1:15PM—Quick, easy lunch for kids and practice for Children's Christmas Play for K-5 Children ONLY

December 11

5:15 PM—Dinner in Finlator Hall
Preschool—6-7:30 PM—Childcare
Kindergarten, First & Second Grade
6:00—6:30 PM—Active Play
6:30—7:00 PM—Music Discovery
7:00—7:30 PM—Micah Kids
Third, Fourth & Fifth Grade
6:00—6:30 PM—Children's Choir*
6:30—7:00 PM—Micah Kids
7:00—7:30 PM—Active Play



December 14

10 AM—Noon - Dress rehearsal for ALL children in Finlator Hall, (Preschool Parents should be present with their children), followed by Christmas cookie decorating (begins at 11:30 AM)

December 15

9 AM—Christmas Pot Luck Breakfast followed by **Children's Christmas Play** in Finlator Hall

December 18

5:15 PM—Dinner in Finlator Hall
6:30-7:30PM—Pullen's Christmas Love Feast Sanctuary, *Children's Choir will sing

December 22

11 AM—Worship Only at Pullen (Childcare for Preschoolers Only)

December 24

7 PM—Child Friendly Christmas Eve Service—Children are asked to arrive at **6:20 PM** to dress up for the Living Nativity during the service.

December 25 MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

December 29

11 AM—Worship Only at Pullen (Childcare for Preschoolers Only)

For more information about Children's Programs at Pullen, reach out to Tommy Cook at tcook@pullen.org.



The Hope Center at Pullen



Merry Christmas from the Hope Center family to yours!

We always kick off this season with our young adults by hosting a potluck Thanksgiving feast at the church for them. It's fast becoming a favorite tradition for staff and clients alike.

You give us the space to host the event, the ovens to make sure the food is warm, and the financial support that makes all of this possible. Even more, you are already showering our young adults with gifts from the Angel Tree. THANK YOU!



2019 Annual Appeal is Off and Running

We hope you've received our 2018-2019 Impact Report by now. If not, let us know by emailing ewitcher@hopecenteratpullen.org and we can get one sent to you. If you've already given, THANK YOU!!! Your support means that we can continue to provide these services that our youth have come to rely on.

If you haven't already given, we'd love for you to join us as we work to help former foster youth transition to adulthood. Thank you again! Merry Christmas, y'all!

-Erin Witcher

New Members



Julia Janaro and Owen Donohoe

Julia and Owen live in East Raleigh with husband/dad Brian, dog Tony, and cat Sophie. Owen loves music, drawing, skateboarding, **most** every sport, and generally being active. He is a proud 6th grader at Martin Middle School and

active in band and chorus. Julia is an architect in Raleigh, has lived in the area since 2002, and is from Williamsburg Virginia. They also enjoy going to K&W after church if anyone would like to join them :)

Michelle Hunter

Michelle, a native of New England, lives in northwest Raleigh with her husband and their 11-year-old son. A former English teacher and tutor, and now a homeschooling parent, she enjoys reading and can often be found in Pullen's library before or after the service. Michelle was drawn to Pullen's emphasis on love and justice for everyone, and looks forward to participating in our Creation Care and other work to build a better world together.



Janet Wise-Thomas and Larry Thomas

Janet and Larry moved to Cary, NC from New York City in May of 2017. In New York they were active members of The Riverside Church for over 24 years. At Riverside they served on many committees, covering the spectrum of services and initiatives that underscore the mission of the church; these included spiritual development, social action and youth development.

Janet is a retired Licensed Clinical Social Worker who is now established in a second career as a certified fitness and wellness instructor working in the Cary and Raleigh communities. Larry retired from a career as an administrator with the City of New York, overseeing Governance and Compliance of city contracted, early childhood development programs.

Janet and Larry are parents of a blended family of a daughter, a son and two grandchildren.

They feel extremely fortunate to have found Pullen and look forward to many fruitful years of Christian service to Pullen's mission.



John Laughter

Although I live in Smithfield where I grew up, I am a Life Insurance agent and Financial Planner with New York Life in the Raleigh-Durham market. I lived in Raleigh for 15 years and often contemplated Pullen, but wasn't sure how I'd fit in a Baptist church. I grew up in the Methodist church and I was heavily involved in the Metropolitan Community Church in Wilmington, where I went to college.

When I moved back to Smithfield, I decided to visit Pullen. It was there I received a warm welcome from everyone I met. I was certain Chalice's message that day was written for me. Roger Crook invited me to take communion that day and I haven't missed a Sunday since. It was ironic that on November 10th, when I joined Pullen, Chalice delivered another message that spoke to me as if she knew I would be listening.

My hobbies include home improvement (I live in a 1950's Cape Cod that needs a lot of cosmetic improvements!), light gardening and live theater and music.

I am glad to make Pullen my home and look forward to being involved as I am able.



Join us on Wednesdays at The Table:

December 11 Device or Vice: Healthy Relationships with Technology

Are you concerned about someone in your life who seems a little too attached to their phone? Is your own relationship with technology...complicated? Hailey Shafir, will talk about the signs of addiction to technology like phones and gaming, how technology helps fuel other addictions, and what we can do about it. Hailey is a Licensed Professional Counselor and Licensed Clinical Addiction Specialist. She is also a medical reviewer and content writer for several large websites,

and, under her business, Therapeutics, she has developed a number of online self-help programs for those struggling with impulse control or addiction issues.

Menu: *Pork Loin, Homemade Apple Sauce, Mashed Potatoes, Bread, Salad Bar, Dessert*

December 18: Christmas Love Feast

6:30-7:30PM, Sanctuary

This evening includes congregational Christmas carols with the music of the Pullen Children's Choir and Pullen Orchestra. See page 4 for more info.

Menu: *White Christmas Chicken Chili, Ham Rolls, Salad Bar*



January Series

We'll start the new year at The Table with a series called **Practicing Wellness**. Many people set goals around wellness for the new year. Reaching those goals often depends on the practices in which we are willing to regularly engage. This series will expose you to chanting, writing and movement as intentional wellness practices. We will learn about the benefits of these practices, and we'll try it out. Maybe you'll discover a practice you want to explore further, but, if not, you will still reap the benefits of having taken out just a little bit of time to be kind to yourself.



- **January 8 - Making Soulful Sounds**
- **January 15- "In So Many Words" Film Screening, and Q&A with Lucy Daniels**
- **January 22 - Writing as Teacher and Healer**
- **January 29 - Moving Well**