



WASHINGTON COOPERATIVE PARISH

January/February 2026 Bi-Monthly Newsletter



Epworth United Methodist Church

60 Merriman Way Road
Moneta, VA 24121
540-721-4926

<https://epworthumcmoneta.org>

Sunday Worship—9:30 a.m.
Livestream also on Facebook:

click link:



Halesford United Methodist Church

1601 Lakewood Forest Road
Moneta, VA 24121
540-520-7875

<https://www.halesfordumc.com>

Sunday Worship—11 a.m.
Livestream also on Facebook:

click link:



Go green! If you would like to subscribe to a full color electronic copy of your monthly newsletter (instead of paper) please email Cindy Lollar - clollar65@gmail.com

Design Team: Teresa Edwards, Kaye Hancock, Betty Johnson, Cindy Lollar



New Mercies

A new year has a way of inviting us to pause. January gives us space to breathe, to look back with gratitude, and to look forward with hope. As we step into 2026, I'm reminded that while calendars change, God's faithfulness does not.

The psalmist declares, "*The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning*" (Lamentations 3:22–23). A new year is not simply a reset of routines, it is a reminder that God continues to meet us with fresh mercy each day. Whatever joys or burdens we carry into this year, we do not walk into it alone.

January is also a time when many people set resolutions, promises to do better, be healthier, or live more intentionally. While discipline has its place, our deepest transformation does not come from willpower alone. It comes from abiding in Christ. As Jesus reminds us, "*Apart from Me you can do nothing*" (John 15:5). My prayer for our church this year is not that we strive harder, but that we draw nearer, to God and to one another.

As a faith community, 2026 offers us new opportunities to serve, to grow, and to love. The needs around us remain great, but so does God's provision. May this be a year when we listen more closely to the Spirit's leading, when compassion guides our actions, and when grace shapes our words.

I encourage you this month to begin the year rooted in prayer. Set aside time for prayer, for Scripture, and for meaningful connection. Reach out. Invite someone to church. Serve where there is need. Small acts of faith, offered consistently, become powerful testimonies over time.

Grace and peace for you and your family as we begin this new chapter together.

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Jeff



What Is Epiphany? Bible Meaning and Holiday Traditions by Jessica Van Roekel (Updated Dec 31, 2025, adapted Jan. 6, 2026)

What is the Meaning of "Epiphany"?

Epiphany is a time of revelation. Jesus revealed himself to the Israelites and the Gentiles as represented by the Wise Men. God doesn't play favorites but receives all whose hearts long for him.

Epiphany means "appearance or manifestation." Throughout the world, Christians celebrate it on January 6 - 12 days after Christmas Day. Many countries refer to it as "Three Kings Day." On this day, Western Christianity recognizes Christ's manifestation to the Gentiles. The Gentiles were represented when The Magi visited the child Jesus and showed how God's gift of the Good News is for everyone. Eastern Christianity observes Jesus' baptism on this day. His baptism revealed his identity to mankind. Epiphany celebrates God revealing himself to the world in the East or the West.

Origin and History of Epiphany

To understand Epiphany's origin, we need to look at the Church Calendar's history. In the first century, the earliest Christians set aside one day a week as the Lord's Day. We observe this day on Sunday. In the second century, they established Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

In the third century, the early Church leaders established Epiphany. This holiday celebrates and recognizes Christ's birth, baptism, the adoration of magi, and the first miracle at Cana. It wasn't until the end of the fourth century that early Christians began observing Christmas and Advent. Christmas became the time to celebrate Jesus' birth. Advent is the four-week period of time before Christmas. It is used to prepare hearts to receive Jesus.

As we can see, Epiphany originated from the earliest Church leaders and has a spiritual meaning. The Church Year begins at Advent. From then, through Pentecost, Christians concentrated on the life and work of Christ. For the rest of the year—Pentecost to Advent—the church year focuses on the teachings of Christ and their applications to the Christian life. The ultimate purpose of the church calendar ensured that Christians covered the entire breadth and depth of the Gospel in the course of a year. The six-month period from Advent to Pentecost covers all six major events: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost.

Traditions of Epiphany Celebration

Since epiphany means manifestation, early celebrations honored any of the four manifestations of Christ. His birth, the adoration of the Magi, Jesus' baptism, and the first miracle at Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine.

These four manifestations reveal God to mankind. At his birth, the angels bore witness, and the shepherds, representing Israel, bowed before Jesus. The visit of the Magi revealed Jesus to the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit descended at His baptism, and God declared Jesus' identity. The first miracle at the Wedding in Cana revealed Jesus' divinity over nature. God disclosed himself to humankind through the person of Jesus. He made himself known so we might know him.

Traditions observing Three Kings Day vary worldwide and have changed over time. During the Middle Ages, celebrations focused on the Magi's journey. In 1336 Italy, one would find processions, ceremonies, nativity plays, and carnivals. Some folklore and customs of Epiphany throughout the world include children receiving gifts on this day rather than on Christmas Day. In some Spanish-speaking countries, three kings deliver gifts, not Santa Claus. On Twelfth Night, as it is known in some countries, children would leave a shoe and a bit of straw on their doorstep. They would find their shoe filled with gifts and the straw gone.

In other culture's past centuries, Twelfth Day, or January 6, marked the end of the Christmas season with feasts and masquerades. Eastern Orthodox Christians called it the "Feast of Lights" to reflect their belief that baptism happens because of spiritual illumination. Today, some people use Epiphany to take down their Christmas decorations and store them away for the next year. The Common Book of Prayer has readings for churches to read to mark the Epiphany season. Many of these readings focus on God revealing himself to his creation.

Do All Christians Celebrate Epiphany/Three Kings Day?

Not all Christians celebrate Three Kings Day, but many do. Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Anglicans, and Eastern Orthodox Christians observe Three Kings Day. Whether someone celebrates Epiphany depends on their own personal choice or whether or not their church observes it. Either way, it is a great way to close out the Christmas season and turn our hearts toward keeping Jesus at the center of our lives.

Reminders that Epiphany Brings

One of the many reasons I love this time of year is because of the daily, physical reminders of Jesus everywhere. The twinkly lights on my tree remind me of the angels announcing Christ's birth to the shepherds. I'm reminded to shine bright in my everyday life each time I walk by my lit tree. The star ornaments point my mind to the star that led the wise men on their two-year journey. This is a gentle reminder that, sometimes, following Christ means I don't know where I'll end up, but if I keep following him, I'll get to where he wants me to be. The tree is shaped like a triangle, which reminds me of the Trinity. The nativity display brings the reality of the stable close to my heart. The music that plays everywhere helps corral my thoughts and fixes them on Jesus. Epiphany, the manifestation of God, is a lovely opportunity to rejoice that Christ has appeared for all men regardless of race or status.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look about you; All assemble and come to you; your sons and daughters are carried on the arm. Then you will look and be radiant, your heart will throb and swell with joy," Isaiah 60:1-5.

A Prayer for Epiphany

Lord Jesus,

Thank you for revealing yourself to us. We shout for joy and worship you with gladness. We come before you with joyful songs and join with the angels as they say, "Glory to God in the highest and peace on earth to men." We receive your peace and comfort. As we continue into the new year, we ask that we remember your divinity and revel in your identity. You are a miracle-working God, and so we ask you to do a mighty work of internal transformation in our lives. Change us to be more like you. Let our words and the meditation of our hearts be pleasing to you. Just as the wise men followed the star, so we commit to following you. Lead and guide us. Comfort and heal us. Let our hearts be set on you as you reveal more and more of yourself to us. We adore you and give you glory.

In your holy name we pray, Amen.

~Submitted by Chris Mosig, Lay Leader

Epworth United Methodist Church



Thanksgiving Eve Service

Thanksgiving Eve service was a Joint Washington Cooperative Parish service, hosted by Halesford. Pastor Jeff preached from Philippians 4:4-9, incorporating what people gave thanks for people in our lives, Church Family, Horn of Plenty with all kinds of goodies coming out of it.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 commands us to rejoice, even though we are going through something, to pray without ceasing. Paul tied prayer and rejoicing together, rejoicing over the accident that didn't happen, for example. In verse 18, we are told to give thanks in all circumstances. Emotions of pain and joy are intertwined. We are to be grateful in all seasons of life, thanking God for getting us through.

1. Gratitude reminds us of God's presence and Christ going to the cross.
2. Gratitude recognizes our hearts, making sure our hearts are right.
3. Gratitude bears witness to God's work, grace becomes testimony.

Never forget God's grace, compassion, and mercy.

5th Sunday Service

Washington Cooperative Parish's Joint 5th Sunday service was held November 30, 2025 at Halesford. It was so good to have the Parish celebrating together!! Our combined choir led in lifting praises to our God. Pastor Jeff spoke on Psalm 122, pilgrims going to Jerusalem.

We are able to come together in unity, in gladness and in sorrow, as the pilgrims did. David was glad to when he was able to go to the House of the Lord. We are together in unity-once we get to church we forget the trials of the world, able to see friends, glad to see people here on 5th Sunday. David's mind and spirit was elevated to gladness as he came into the House of the Lord.



When in the House, we can hear testimonies of how God got others through trials, and we know God will get us through trials also. When we are in the House of the Lord, we are away from the noise of life. In the presence of God, we have peace and praise God for His safety. We know God is like any good parent, He will take care of us. We are charged in Matthew 28:19-20 to transform the world into God's disciples. Pastor Jeff was reminded of Joshua 24:15, "as for me and my house, I will serve the Lord." The enemy wants us to be silent, but we are strong in the Word of God and will not conform to the world. Fellowship and lunch followed the service.







Hope Peace Joy Love Christ
Hope Peace Joy Love Christ
Lighting The Advent Candles



United
Women
in Faith

Halesworth UWF met November 17, for a time of planning, food and fellowship.



During this time together, we prayed over 2 homeless mats. These mats marked the first time that our ministry has extended to Stepping Stone in Rocky Mount, VA.



Stepping Stone Mission of Franklin County, Inc. is with Epworth United Methodist Church and Halesford United Methodist Church.

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♥ A Huge Thank You to HalesWorth United Women in Faith!

We are blown away by the super creative mats hand-crocheted from recycled plastic grocery bags. ☀ Not only are they eco-friendly, but they're also incredibly useful for some of our friends who need a bedding alternative or a little extra comfort.

Your thoughtfulness, skill, and care make a real difference in our community. We're so grateful for your generosity and creativity!

We ❤️ our community!

#HalesWorthUnitedWomenInFaith
#SteppingStoneMission #CommunityCare
#CreativeKindness #RecycledWithLove



Thus far, mats have been given to the Warming Shelter in Redwood UMC, RAM House, Rescue Mission and now Stepping Stone.

Unfortunately, the need is still felt, as more are facing the prospect of homelessness. We are thankful that we can do our part as hands and feet of Christ to help.

Our next meeting is January 26, 2026, 4pm. Come join us!

The History of 'The Twelve Days of Christmas'

The song, "The Twelve Days of Christmas" is an English Christmas carol. From 1558 until 1829, Roman Catholics in England were not permitted to practice their faith openly. Someone during that era wrote this carol as a catechism song for young Catholics. It has two levels of meaning: the surface meaning plus a hidden meaning known only to members of the Church. Each element in the carol has a code word for a religious reality which the children could remember. To fit the number scheme, when you reach number 9, representing the Fruits of the Holy Ghost, the originator combined 6 to make 3, taking the 6 fruits that were similar: the fruit in each parenthesis is the that was not named separately. There are actually Twelve Fruits of the Holy Ghost.

The "True Love" one hears in the song is not a smitten boy or girlfriend but Jesus Christ, because truly Love was born on Christmas Day. The partridge in the pear tree also represents Him because that bird is willing to sacrifice its life if necessary to protect its young by feigning injury to draw away predators.

According to Ann Ball in her book, [HANDBOOK OF CATHOLIC SACRAMENTALS](#):
The two turtle doves were the Old and New Testaments

The three French hens stood for faith, hope, and love.

The four calling birds were the four gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

The five golden rings rerepresented the first five books of the Old Testament, which describe man's fall into sin and the great love of God in sending a Savior.

The six geese a-laying stood for the six days of creation.

Seven swans a-swimming represented the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Spirit-----Prophesy, Serving, Teaching, Exhortation, Contribution, Leadership, and Mercy.

The eight maids a-milking were the eight beatitudes.

Nine ladies dancing were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit-----Charity, Joy, Peace, Patience [Forbearance], Goodness [Kindness], Mildness, Fidelity, Modesty, Continency [Chastity].

The ten lords a-leaping were the Ten Commandments.

The eleven pipers piping stood for the eleven faithful Apostles.

The twelve drummers drumming symbolized the twelve points of belief in The Apostles' Creed.

Original Source: Fr. Calvin Goodwin, FSSP, Nebraska

Printed with permission from [Catholic Tradition](#).

CAN — Catholic News Agency

<https://www.catholicnewsagency.com/resource/55904/the-history-of-the-twelve-days-of-christmas>

The District UWF 3rd Annual Movie and Soups Day will be held February 21, at Kaleidoscope on Hardy Road. Tentative plans include morning session set for 10am, with a session for children and parents, and one

for adults. Renee will definitely be cooking her yummy soups, and popcorn will also be available. The afternoon session will include a book or movie and discussion. You can attend all day, or part of the day. Resources will count toward points for reading awards at the end of the UWF year, and topics will be timely. Please put this event on your calendar and make plans to attend!!!



VALENTINE'S DAY WORD SEARCH

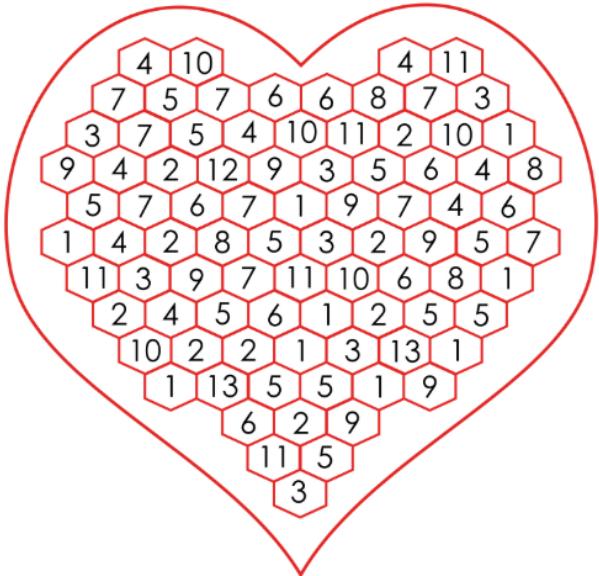
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VALENTINE FLOWERS	ROMANCE CUPID	LOVE BOUQUET
RED	KISS	HEART
CHOCOLATE	BE MINE	ROSES
I LOVE YOU	GIFT	FALL IN LOVE
ADMIRER	SWEETHEART	FEBRUARY
HUG	PINK	CANDY



Heart Sum Game

Find pairs of adjacent shapes that add up to 14.



https://www.printablee.com/post_valentine-s-day-printable-puzzles_246333/



January Birthdays

2	Clarence Allen	(Halesford)
7	Ann Bolling	(Epworth)
7	Pat Young	(Epworth)
9	Brenda Goad	(Halesford)
15	Alease Frazier	(Halesford)
22	Glenn Prather	(Halesford)

February Birthdays

5	Kaye Hancock	(Halesford)
6	Rev. Kelvin Edwards	(Halesford)
11	Carol Jean Gramling	(Epworth)
12	Nancy Blankenship	(Epworth)
16	Chris Mosig	(Epworth)
20	Carolyn Crider	(Halesford)
21	Jay Hairston	(Halesford)
22	George Ruple	(Epworth)
27	Doris Dillard	(Halesford)

January Anniversaries

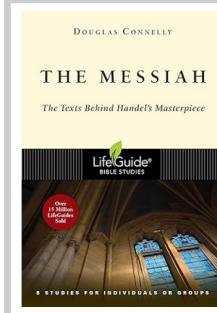
25 Waine & Diane Taylor (Halesford)

February Anniversaries

None

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **January 18**—Devotions for Lenten books due
- **January 26**—UWF Meet 4 pm @ Epworth
- **February 17**—Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- **February 18**—Ash Wednesday
- **February 21**—District UWF 3rd Annual Movie and Soups Day @ Kaleidoscope
- **February 23**—UWF Meet 4 pm @ Epworth



Sunday School

Thursdays @ 7:30 p.m.

via Zoom

contact Cindy Lollar for link:
clollar65@gmail.com

Prayer Meeting —Every Other Thursday @ 7:00 p.m.
 (see calendar for schedule)



via Zoom—contact Cindy Lollar for
 link: clollar65@gmail.com



**Sundays @
 Epworth UMC
 9:30 a.m.**

Please let Cindy (Epworth) or Betty (Halesford) know if you have a prayer request you would like added and also updates on those currently listed.

Prayer Meeting held every other Thursday @ 7:00 p.m. on Zoom

Collecting: plastic bags from your grocery or department store for plarn (plastic yarn) to make into homeless mats. Help the Halesworth UWF keep these bags out of the landfills. Please place in the recycle bin located in the Narthex. Thank you!!

**Collecting New Socks for the Homeless ~
 Drop Box is in the Narthex at
 Epworth UMC
 "Socks for Lost Souls"**



Socks are currently being donation to
 Rescue Mission in Roanoke:
<https://rescuemission.net/>



Thank you to all who are signed up with the Kroger Community Rewards program for Halesford (QD391) or Epworth (EP178). Without realizing that when you shop, a percentage of your total order is shared with our churches through the Community Rewards Program.

Here is the link to get started:
<https://www.kroger.com/i/>

January 2026

AA meets every Monday, Wednesday, & Friday @ 9:00 a.m. @ Epworth UMC

Tuesdays @ 7:00 p.m. @ Epworth , and

Wednesdays @ 7:00 p.m. @ Halesford UMC

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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				1 New Year's Day	2	3
4	5	6	7	8 Prayer 7:00 PM Sunday School 7:30 pm on Zoom	9	10
11	12 Ad Council Meeting 6pm (Epworth)	13	14	15 Sunday School 7:30 pm on Zoom	16	17
18 Devotions for Lenten books due	19	20	21	22 Prayer 7:00 PM Sunday School 7:30 pm on Zoom	23	24
25	26 UWF Meeting 4 PM @ Epworth	27	28	29 Sunday School 7:30 pm on Zoom	30	31



February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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1	2	3	4	5 Prayer 7:00 PM Sunday School 7:30 pm on Zoom	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 Sunday School 7:30 pm on Zoom	13	14 Valentine's Day 
15	16	17 Shrove Tuesday	18 Ash Wednesday Lent Begins	19 Prayer 7:00 PM Sunday School 7:30 pm on Zoom	20	21 District UWF 3rd Annual Movie & Soups Day at Kaleidoscope
22	23 UWF Meeting 4 PM @ Epworth	24	25	26 Sunday School 7:30 pm on Zoom	27	28