

## Devotion, Week of June 7, 2026

**Rev. Jeanne Simpson**

I just spent several days with my family – my children and spouses, and my brother and his family. There were 13 of us in a VRBO at Lake James, NC. We were together so that we could bury Jim's ashes at my Huffman family's cemetery. The little church, Walker's Chapel Baptist, was founded by my family near Morganton, NC by my German ancestors after the Lutheran church burned in 1798. They could not find another Lutheran pastor to come serve this rural community, so they finally hired a circuit riding Baptist preacher. Even then, they used the German Bible until the 1930's and the men and women sat on separate sides of the sanctuary. We had 35 of my cousins and family there for the service, and it was quite meaningful to be in this historic place.

Jim and I inherited my grandparents' farm, and we sold it in 2020 to a cousin. So after the service and lunch, a number of us headed over to the farm to see what my cousins had done with it. I was blown away. This young family with three children has made it into a certified community farm, with dairy cows, honey, pigs, chickens, and even highland cows (those shaggy, short little ones). There was a baby highland cow named Maxine that all the children loved petting. Even the dairy cows let us pet them. This family has so much energy – they do special farm education programs for school children, grow strawberries for picking, and in the fall do a big corn maze and pumpkin patch. Jim and I would never have had that energy. Just raising the Angus cattle and having a small garden was all we ever managed. But here's the next generation fully embracing God' creation and bounty. I know Jim, my parents, and my grandparents are proud of this beautiful place and all the hard work of their descendants. It gave me peace, knowing we did the right thing in selling it to them.

Being with family is critically important – we often don't see cousins and more distant family enough, but that is our heritage and we should embrace it as much as we can. My crew decided that we're going to all get together once a year near the church and farm, and celebrate the blessings God has given us as a family. I hope you can do that too.

*Jeanne*