

# #THE CONTACT

A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FROM CARMEL UNITED METHODIST CHURCH // JUNE 2026

## June 2026

- Letter from Pastor Tim
- VBS: Monday June 8 - Thursday June 11: 6pm-8:30pm
- Youth: Events & Celebrating Our High School Seniors!
- Music Ministry: Year-End Dinner Recap
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- One Great Summer Read: "The Amazing Generation"
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**RAINFOREST  
FALLS**  
Exploring the Nature of God



## When Is Enough Going to be Enough?

I am sitting here this afternoon, absorbing the news of another mass shooting in San Diego—another mass shooting in a place of worship. Shootings like this have happened so often. It's happened so far away. It's happened to adherents of Islam—not to me and my faith community. It's not until I hear that there has been a spike of recent hate crimes against our Jewish and Muslim fellow citizens, that I feel led to speak out. Some of this anger is tied up in the violence between Israel and the Palestinians, some of it because we are at war with an unapologetic Islamic state, and a great deal of these prejudices are tied up in our historic desire to blame “the other” for whatever is going wrong in our lives.

Let me cut to the chase with you. Jesus ministered—intentionally and systematically—to those who did not share his faith in the God of Moses and the law. He healed a Roman Centurion, a Samaritan leper, a woman at a well, as well as a mentally ill gentile, haunting the local cemetery on the other side of the Sea of Galilee. One of his best parables is about how those who shared his faith missed the chance to show compassion, only to be shown up by a Samaritan whose faith was different (actually despised) from his fellow Jews. There are some solid reasons why Jesus showed love and compassion to those of other faiths.

1. You can't capture the hearts and minds of those you hope to win over by rejecting them. It's hard to convince someone that your God is a God of love and grace if you look down on them and make rash judgements on their worship or beliefs.
2. The God Jesus worshipped has a plan in place for all the nations of the world and all the people of the world to one day bring them all together under his rule. Abraham, after all, was called to be a light to an unbelieving world—blessed to be a blessing to every race and people.
3. Jesus could hardly be anti-Semitic when he was born, raised, and died a Jew. We forget that all of the people who were part of the Kingdom of God movement were women and men of the Hebrew faith (at first). If we don't understand the essential Jewishness of Jesus, then we cannot expect to understand Jesus at all.

I could go on, but you get the drift. We have real disagreements with our Jewish and Muslim neighbors, no doubt. But all of us are part of what is sometimes called “the Abrahamic faiths”. In other words, we all claim to have our origin in the same Great Grand Parents: Abraham & Sarah. If these two were to be able to stage a great family reunion we would be eating fried chicken and potato salad alongside Muslims, Jews, and even those Christian churches whose beliefs drive us crazy.

It has been said that whatever you do, don't bring up religion or politics because you're bound to get into an argument. Add race to that mix and you've named the Great American Trifecta of taboos. Alas, it includes the most important topics we as fellow citizens need to clarify with one another. It's unfortunate that we've reached a point at which we can't explore our differences in those areas without judgment, anger, and condemnation. **My prayer is that we, as followers of the Prince of Peace, can stand against stereotypes, conspiracy theories, and uninformed judgments.** In fact, I believe it is part and parcel of our calling. To love our neighbors as ourselves means we respect the integrity of Jews and Muslims in exactly the same way we want them to respect our devotion to Christ.

Our country has become increasingly filled with hate in the last decade or so. Increasingly, folks are turning to violence, vandalism, and threats in order to punish or intimidate those they disagree with. Disciples of Jesus should have nothing to do with those who advocate hate or rage against anyone. I'm not just talking about your personal acquaintances', I'm talking about Youtube channels, cable pundits, or shock jock radio shows. You'd be surprised how much we are shaped and influenced by the media we consume.

In the fifth chapter of Matthew's gospel, Jesus explicitly rejects limited love: ***“If you love those who love you, what reward do you have?”*** Christians are not merely called to tolerate others, but we're called to embody the indiscriminate mercy of God. Let us be the salt and light of grace and peace amidst religious and racial bigotry. And maybe, just maybe, we can be an influence in our little corner of the world to nip this damaging evil in the bud.

(And here's the saddest part: by the time this newsletter is sent out most of us will have forgotten all about this act of violence and moved on to other things. We've become inured to what is going on around us. May we always have a heart for the things God has a heart for and may we never stop praying for His Kingdom to come here on earth as it is in heaven.)



Pastor Tim

# CHURCH UPDATES

## Finance Committee Report

Each month the finance committee will provide an update on contribution totals that have been received year-to-date. The information provided is current through the timing of the submission for The Contact.

### Operating Budget.

**Total Contribution Income** (through 05/26/2026)  
\$ 609,708

**Budgeted total contributions for 2026**  
\$ 1,417,000

**Total budgeted expenses for 2026**  
\$ 1,627,700

### Missions Budget (through 05/26/2026).

**Total MISSIONS Contribution Income** \$ 91,679

**Total MISSIONS Grants from outside sources** \$ 22,816

## GROUP Meetings for JUNE

■ **ONE GREAT SUMMER READ:** “The Amazing Generation” Discussions on **June 25 at Noon & June 28 at 9am**. Email Pastor Jessica with questions: [jstevens@carmelumc.org](mailto:jstevens@carmelumc.org)

■ **PRAYER SHAWL CIRCLE:** knitting & crocheting. **Every Tuesday—12:30pm-2:30pm** in the Gathering Place at the sofas

■ **QUILTING CIRCLE—**Fridays 9:30am to 12pm in LL23, Contact Marie at [mdrharris@aol.com](mailto:mdrharris@aol.com)

■ **FRIENDS IN FAITH BIBLE STUDY—**We meet next in September (usually on **Weds in the Conf. Room 3:30-5:00pm**). Stay tuned for details! Contact Nancy Adams at [nadams35@att.net](mailto:nadams35@att.net)

■ **RUTH ANNA CIRCLE—**will meet at Caliente Restaurant in Carmel on Tuesday, **June 9 at 11:30AM**. This is our last meeting until Sept. Let Marie know you are coming: [mdrharris@aol.com](mailto:mdrharris@aol.com)

■ **DINNER BELLES—**are meeting at Chicken Salad Chick in Carmel on **June 9 at 6pm!** Contact: Kay [Kayhapner@yahoo.com](mailto:Kayhapner@yahoo.com)

■ **LYDIA CIRCLE —**are meeting at Culver’s in Carmel on **June 11 at 6pm!**

If you would like YOUR group to be included here, send an email to **Jennifer Warf** [jwarf@carmelumc.org](mailto:jwarf@carmelumc.org)

## Joys & Concerns

### With Sympathy to the family & friends of...

- **Rev. Lennie Lawrence** who passed away on **March 7** (was associate pastor here at CUMC from 1999-2001)

## PRAYER CONCERNS

- \* **CUMC E-PRAYER CHAIN:** [CLICK HERE](#) to be added
- \* **PRAYER REQUESTS:** Email to Ed King, [edking722@gmail.com](mailto:edking722@gmail.com) with details
- \* **PRAYER MENTIONS in WORSHIP:** Email Sue Burchill, [sburchill@carmelumc.org](mailto:sburchill@carmelumc.org)



Join us for a City Barbeque fundraiser supporting:

**CARMEL UMC UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH**

**Tuesday, 6/16/2026 | All day**  
**City Barbeque**  
1356 S. Range Line Rd.  
Carmel, IN 46032

IF YOU ARE NOT DINING IN-STORE, USE ONLINE CODE:

**GIVE**

Vacation Bible School, also referred to as "VBS", is a traditional summer outreach program in Children's Ministry. There are over 100 years of VBS history in the US, and we are just a small part of that.

The core of VBS is teaching children about the Bible, the love of Jesus, and enjoying worship with music, movement and games.

This year we have 40 Preschoolers & Kindergarteners experiencing VBS through a morning camp.

We will continue our evening VBS experience with our Elementary kids & volunteers as we have for over a decade. Registration is open through June 1.

At Carmel UMC, VBS is supported through the annual operating budget, loose change in the month of June, and in-kind donations.



## JUNE 2026

### Sundays in June

Summer Sunday School  
10:45-11:30am

### June 8-11

VBS Rainforest Falls

### Preschool Camps

June 8-11, 15-18, 22-25, 29-Jul 2

### Tuesdays (June 16, 23, 30)

Open Playground 6:00-7:30pm

### Thursdays (June 18, 25)

Open Playground 6:00-7:30pm

Click [here](#) to visit the [Youth Ministries Page!](#) Sign up forms, and updated info on all events are available online.

# YOUTH MINISTRY

Rick Belbutoski • [youth@carmelumc.org](mailto:youth@carmelumc.org)

## June: A Month of Growing Faith & Friendship

As summer begins, our youth ministry is entering one of the most meaningful seasons of the year. In June, many of our middle and high school students will spend the month serving, growing, and building friendships that often last far beyond the summer itself.

From June 8–11, students will help lead and support Vacation Bible School, serving younger children with energy, patience, and joy. It is always encouraging to watch our youth step into leadership roles and discover the impact they can have on the lives of others.

Just a few days later, many of our middle school students will head to Camp Adventure (June 14–19), a week filled with worship, laughter, outdoor activities, and intentional faith conversations. For generations of students, church camp has been more than simply a fun week away—it has been a place where lifelong memories are formed, friendships deepen, and faith becomes more personal.

In a world that often feels busy and disconnected, experiences like these provide young people with the opportunity to slow down, build meaningful relationships, and encounter the love of God in community. We are grateful for the prayers, encouragement, and support of our church family as these students continue to grow in faith together.



### Youth Group Moves to Wednesday Nights for the Summer.

If you're looking to support the next generation of believers, love playing silly games, or are a good listener email Rick about becoming a youth volunteer.  
[rbelbutoski@carmelumc.org](mailto:rbelbutoski@carmelumc.org)

## Celebrating Our High School Seniors



**Josie Bellotti**

Josie is graduating from Carmel High School, and plans to attend Indiana University in Bloomington. Josie will major in earth science before working on a Masters and Doctoral programs in paleontology.



**Julia Cox**

Julia is graduating from Carmel High School, and plans to attend University of Southern Indiana. Julia will major in diagnostic sonography and is pursuing a professional career in the medical field.



**Dierdre McClellan**

Dierdre is graduating from Indiana Digital Learning School and plans to attend Northern School of Contemporary Dance in Leeds, England where she'll continue to hone her craft by studying dance.



**Nolan Zircher**

Nolan is also graduating from Carmel High School and the winner of this year's CUMC Higher Education Committee Scholarship. He plans to attend George Washington in Washington DC & study international relations & business.



## Traditional Music Celebrates a Spectacular Season

Written by Will Wingfield

The Music Ministry's end-of-season celebration dinner on **May 13** was a warm evening of gratitude, fellowship and music honoring the singers, handbell ringers, staff and volunteers who helped accompany Traditional Worship throughout the year.

Attendees were welcomed with harp music from Acclaim! soprano **Jen Midkiff** while the **Sacred Strings** trio provided a live music backdrop to the meal catered by Maggiano's Little Italy. On each table, centerpieces handmade by **Faye Thomas** added to the ambiance.

During the program, **Director of Music Ministry David Morton** recognized the **Chancel Choir, the Handbell Choir, Acclaim! and the Children's Choir** for their faithful service. Special appreciation was shown to accompanist **Ray Lahrman**, organist **Ellen Rhoades** and audio/visual tech **Chris Lieber** for their dedication and skill. **Stephanie Ross** was also recognized and bid a fond farewell ahead of her move to Pennsylvania.

Set designers and costume seamstresses who helped bring the Christmas Cantata to life were highly praised ahead of upcoming costume workshops scheduled this July 18 and 25.

As a gesture of thanks, each ministry member and volunteer was invited to take home a beautiful orchid to symbolize the grace and vibrancy they bring to our church through music. Thanks again to everyone who made this year so exceptional!



**Save the date!** All music lovers are invited to join us for next year's End-of-Season Banquet as we celebrate another wonderful year of music, fellowship and ministry. Mark your calendars now for Wednesday, **May 19, 2027**. We look forward to gathering together to honor the season, celebrate our musicians, and share in the joy of music at Carmel UMC.

# Christmas in July: Christmas Cantata Craft Workshop

with Costume Designer & Maker, **Barry Doss**

Last December, many in our congregation helped create the stunning Broadway-style costumes featured in our Christmas Cantata production. This July, Costume Designer & Maker Barry Doss returns to Carmel United Methodist Church to continue the work — adding finishing details, embellishments, rigging, clasps, stitching, and new costume elements for future productions.



We are inviting volunteers of *all skill levels* to join us for two special workshop days at CUMC on **Saturday, July 18** and **Saturday, July 25** from **9:00 AM–5:00 PM**. Lunch will be provided. Volunteers may participate for as little or as much time as they would like throughout the day. Whether you enjoy sewing, hand stitching, attaching hooks and clasps, organizing materials, or even helping “bedazzle” costumes with beads and gems, there will be something for everyone to do. If you can sew on a button, we can definitely use your help!

Those interested should click on the Event Sign-Up link below, or on the church’s **EVENTS** or **MUSIC** website. Please indicate which workshop date(s) you plan to attend, approximately what time you expect to arrive, and how long you anticipate staying so we can plan team work stations and lunch accordingly.



## MUSIC MINISTRY

David Morton • [dmorton@carmelumc.org](mailto:dmorton@carmelumc.org)

### Acclaim! Profile

#### Kim Guindon, Alto Section Leader

Our next profile of the new Acclaim! members in Traditional Worship is alto section leader **Kim Guindon**. Whether blending voices in a choir, connecting a young adult to a career path, or introducing people to the love of music, Kim’s world revolves around service and shared experiences.

Her life in music began in middle and high school, where she played the saxophone across marching, pep, concert, and jazz bands. Kim joined show choir her junior year at Pike High School, she met a community of vocalists with whom she still keeps in touch.

“I fell in love with connecting music through body, community and words,” she says.

The experience inspired Kim to study music education at Ball State University, where she began singing with Methodist choirs. She sees her work with church choirs as sharing her love of music and a way of serving others.

A high point of her music career was singing with Andrea Bocelli and the Indianapolis Men’s Chorus in 2022.



After college graduation, Kim taught middle school choir for five years in the Warren and Washington township school districts. The challenge of teaching virtual choir during the COVID pandemic prompted Kim to make a “key change” in her own life.

She earned a Master’s degree in educational psychology and served as a recruiter for an arts and design college and a job coach for disabled students. About a month ago, Kim stepped into a new role setting up internships and work-based learning for Sheridan and Hamilton Heights high school students.

But Kim has not stepped away from music education. During the week, she teaches preschool music classes through the Indianapolis Children’s Choir using instruments, song and musical play.

As parent to a busy two-year-old and two dogs, Kim now spends more weekends at parks than concerts. But she and her husband of five years never miss the annual Dave Matthews Band tour!

# June Mission of the Month is Vacation Bible School (VBS)

We are so excited to support a morning VBS for preschoolers and evening VBS for elementary aged kids this year. To provide this children's ministry outreach we depend on your loose change donation in the month of June, in kind donations for snacks and supplies, and volunteers who run the stations and show the children attending our great our God's love is!

We want to thank you for all your donations, and if you would still like to volunteer please reach out!



This year children will get to help with projects to support Bags of Hope, Midwest Missions, Carmel Coat Closet, Carmel Food Pantry, and Family Promise.

## Missions Activities in June



Our sewing group will be meeting to continue to sew bags for SERVE WEEK! No experience required. We always need help cutting fabric, and ironing too. Wednesday 6/10 and 6/24 at 10:30am email: [missions@carmelumc.org](mailto:missions@carmelumc.org) w/questions

CUMC is a collection hub for Midwest Missions School Supplies! Please drop your gently used school supplies in the 24/7 donation room at the Food Pantry. These supplies will be packed to be sent to schools in Honduras.



Thank you for all the donations for Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis in May. We don't know the official date yet, but we are looking for some people to help with the apartment set up in the month of June. If you are interested please email [missions@carmelumc.org](mailto:missions@carmelumc.org)

Looking for a reason to get outside in the beautiful weather? Help the Food Pantry Garden by signing up to water the newly planted raised beds and green beans.



Sign Up for Gardens:



Thank you to New Hope of Indiana for coming to weave on the plarn mats.



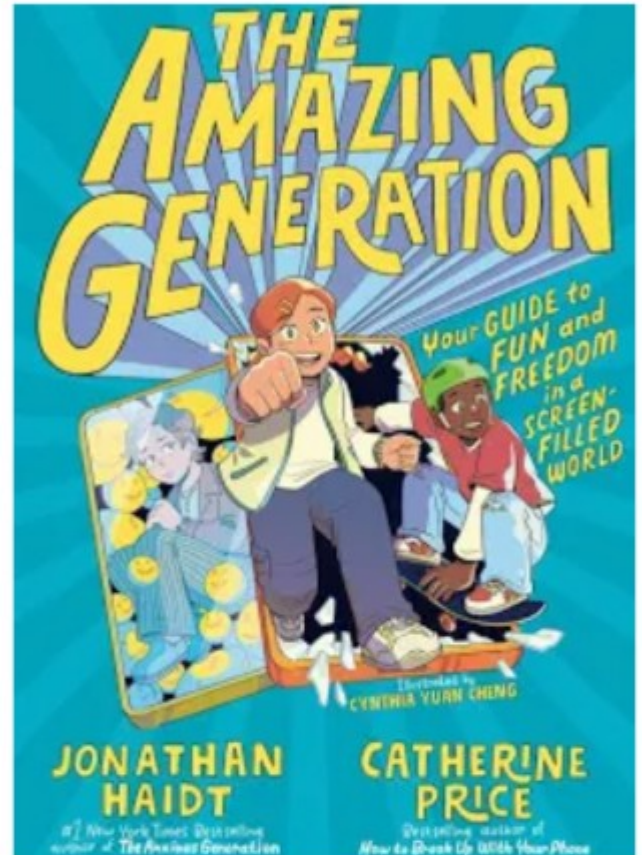
Do you have a group that needs a summer project email [missions@carmelumc.org](mailto:missions@carmelumc.org) to set up a time to weave. We have all the supplies ready for you.

## One Great Summer Read

Each summer, our congregation chooses a secular book to read and discuss together. In past years, we've explored history and other thought-provoking topics through our "One Great Summer Read."

This summer, we've chosen *The Amazing Generation* in graphic novel form. If you're surprised by the format, don't be — this book is designed for readers of all ages and offers an engaging, accessible look at an important topic facing our world today.

Author Jonathan Haidt partnered with Catherine Price to explore the impact of screens — especially social media — on our lives, relationships, and well-being. Their work has shaped national conversations, including recent legislation in Indiana limiting cellphone and smartwatch use in public schools beginning July 1.



As a church, we believe faith invites us to engage thoughtfully with the world around us. Our hope is that reading this book together will help us reflect on how technology shapes our lives and where God may be calling us toward deeper connection, wisdom, and community. Join us for discussion and conversation on:

- June 25 at noon
- June 28 at 9:00 a.m.

We'd love to read and learn alongside you this summer!

Are you looking for a way to join in, but don't know where to start? Send me an email, and I will be glad to help you join a group, or form a new one! - [Pastor Jessica Stevens](mailto:jstevens@carmelumc.org)

# SUMMER INTERN: CHILDREN & YOUTH

Jaleigh White • [jwhite@carmelumc.org](mailto:jwhite@carmelumc.org)

## Welcome our Youth & Children Summer Intern: Jaleigh White

Hi there! My name is Jaleigh (Juh-Lee) White, and I am excited to be your Children and Youth Intern for Summer 2026. This upcoming school year, I will be a senior at Ball State University, majoring in Elementary Education with a concentration in ABA (Applied Behavior Analysis). I grew up in Southern Indiana in a small town called Princeton. In my free time, I enjoy reading, hiking on new trails, and I'm a major Swiftie!

Summer is here, and I am eager to get involved in the many wonderful programs and opportunities within the children and youth ministries. VBS was always one of my favorite things, and to this day, crafts and worship have remained my favorite parts. I'm currently working alongside Mrs. Shaina to plan the Summer Sunday School. It's always such a joy to see kids weekly and have a blast learning in faith.

Being a youth myself just a few years ago, I truly connect and love youth programming. Rick and I have some fun plans in store for the summer youth group. I am especially looking forward to going on the Camp Adventure and Puerto Rico trips. The deep dive into faith, lifelong connections and fun times I have experienced on my own through church camps and missions trips make me that much more thrilled to walk alongside the youth and be a part of their memories this summer.



I grew up in a United Methodist Church, and it quickly became my second home. My mom was the childcare coordinator growing up and is now the senior pastor at my home church. From a young age I have been heavily involved in the church. If there was a children's event I was there — from Children's Church and Wednesday night programming to VBS and church camps. I have always loved volunteering and leading, and would regularly help out in the nursery and toddler rooms on Sunday mornings.

One of my favorite ways I connect with my faith is through worship. I grew up in the children's choir, eventually became the youngest member of the adult choir, and later served as a leader on our youth worship team. These experiences gave me the opportunity to grow in my faith alongside others. The relationships I made with my own children and youth ministry leaders left a lifelong impact on me. This summer, I can't wait to be a part of Carmel United Methodist Church and build those same meaningful relationships with your children and youth!



## Update from May 31st Sanctuary Meeting

Thank you to everyone who navigated the Carmel Marathon traffic to hear the Trustees and our in house experts from the Traditional Worship team share preliminary concepts for upgrading and modernizing our Sanctuary. For those who missed the meeting, the following are some highlights from their presentation.

### Need for Renovations

We have been blessed to have a wonderful space to hear and share the Good News of Jesus. As friends, neighbors and new visitors attend our services, we want to present the best version of ourselves, helping to establish an environment conducive to experiencing God's message through words and music, that encourages return visits. Over time, some of our audio and visual equipment has become dated and is in need of an upgrade.

### Key Areas for Renovation

#### Adding new directional lighting in chancel area

This would add flexibility to illuminate different spaces during worship or special presentations. The goal would be to make this as low profile as possible.

#### New equipment to control the lighting

We would utilize similar tools that have been recently added to our Contemporary services. Currently, any lighting changes are managed from the pulpit which can be missed or be disruptive.

#### New Video Screens

We currently use a projection system that has dimmed over the years making viewing from the back pews more challenging. New LED technology has become more affordable and is brighter and clearer. You probably have seen these screen in many venues including the Carmel Midtown Plaza

The above projects would be the first and most major renovations for the Sanctuary.

Other items under consideration include:

#### Improved acoustics/audio equipment

Providing equipment for the hearing impaired along with better amplification equipment is under review. This could particularly improve the online worship experience. We'd also look for additional adjustments, perhaps to the ceiling etc, to enhance acoustics.

#### Relocating the Eternal Flame

There have been comments that the current location can block the video screen from some pews. There could be a better location in the sanctuary for this important element.

#### Upgrading Flooring

The carpet in the Sanctuary is in good shape and does not need replacing. However, the flooring in the pews may need a facelift, especially if it enhances the acoustics.

#### Paint

A refresh of the paint, particularly on the ceiling would brighten the space.

#### Comments/Q & A/Additional Information

There was time allotted for questions along with comments or concerns. We have posted the entire presentation on the [Renovate & Elevate web page on the CUMC Website](#). If you'd like to make a comment or have a question, please email the team at [cumc\\_bldmgr@carmelumc.org](mailto:cumc_bldmgr@carmelumc.org).

**Thank you to everyone who have contributed to the Capital Campaign. Your donations make these and other improvements possible !**





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*At Carmel UMC we are connecting with God and others, growing in faith and love through Biblical learning, and serving our community and world as followers of Jesus Christ.*

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



# THE CONTACT JUNE 2026

## CHECK INSIDE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

### LOOK INSIDE

for more information about all the happenings at CUMC!

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ONLY at the **CARMEL Meijer**...  
 SCAN THIS CARD and the  
**CUMC FOOD PANTRY**  
 will get the donations from  
**Mar. 29 through Jun. 21, 2026**

**Double Match Day is June 20!**

Every *Simply Give* card scanned at the checkout at the **Carmel Meijer** location will benefit our CUMC Food Pantry until June 21.

Tell your friends and neighbors that they can make a difference \$10 at a time! Cards are at the registers when you check out!