

#THE CONTACT

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



July 2026

- Letter from Pastor Tim: Celebrating 250 Years!
- Youth: Summer Youth Group & Pizza Mondays
- Mission of the Month: Food Pantry
- Missions: FP Canned Fruit vs. Meat CONTEST
- Music Ministry: Christmas in July
- Henderson Photos & Recap
- Quilting Circle: Reaching Out Beyond Our Church
- Children: VBS photos & Upcoming Events
- Building Trustees: Project Updates
- Capital Campaign: Celebrating a Year of Successes



CARMEL
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

Carmel United Methodist Church
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The Big 250: Pastoral thoughts on *The Greatest Sentence Ever Written*

So it's the big 250th for the United States of America. A quarter of a millennia since our Declaration of Independence set out a radical vision of what it means to be citizens united in a new kind of democracy. Biographer and historian Walter Isaacson has written a new book entitled *the Greatest Sentence Ever Written*. His focus is on the second sentence of the Declaration which states: **"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."** It is a powerful assertion that has echoed throughout the history of this and many other countries once it was published. But is it the greatest sentence ever written?

This sentence has certainly given us a lot to live up to: all humankind being created by God to be equal; unalienable rights--not privileges that must be earned—of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. It sets the bar high for those of us who have come after.

Even in its own day it was a sentence that was more aspirational than descriptive. Slaves were not considered equal. Women were not considered equal. Non land owning men were not equal enough to be entrusted with the vote. The sentence's greatness comes not because it describes what was already in practice, but because it describes a commitment to make equality and liberty the basis for our shared national life. This was intended to be the standard upon which we would judge our leaders, our institutions, and our national character. (If you're interested, I'd recommend Isaacson's short book.)

Alas, though I would argue for the steady progress of our nation toward equality for all—toward a level playing ground for all those working toward their own happiness—it hasn't been a victorious march forward. As an amateur historian I can only observe that more often than not it's been two steps forward and one step back.

All that being said, I'm still not sure Isaacson's sentence is the greatest ever written. As a pastor, I'm more interested in the sentences behind that sentence. There is no doubt that the following

sentences helped inspire "thee" sentence. Let me share you just a smattering of sentences that have a whole different level of greatness written all over them.

- Galatians 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
- Psalm 100:3 "Know that the Lord is God. It is he that made us, and we are his."
- Galatians 5:1 "For freedom Christ has set us free."
- John 10:10 "I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."
- Luke 12:48 "To whom much is given, much is required."

I believe we want to be a nation where every woman and man are judged by the content of their character not the color of their skin. We want to be a people who can love their enemies and relate positively to our neighbors even if we disagree with them. We want to be a people unified not just in defending our rights, but in fulfilling our responsibilities to one another and to our country. We still aspire to be that shining city on the hill.

I like the way one commentator put it: "*The Declaration says people are created equal and endowed by their Creator with certain rights. Scripture goes even deeper: every person is made in the image of God, receives life from God, and stands before God with a dignity that no ruler can create and no ruler should take away.*"

I am not a fan at all of what is known today as Christian Nationalism. It is an attempt to merge evangelical Christianity with American Exceptionalism. We know better. Ours is not the God of one nation above others. Ours is the God of grace and blessing for all God's children with no exceptions. We in this country have been blessed not because we are so exceptional—we have been blessed so that we might be a blessing to all the nations of the world. Sometimes I think we should change our presidential sign off from "God bless America" to "God has richly blessed America. May America continue to be God's blessing to the world."

Pastor Tim

Handwritten signature of Pastor Tim.

CHURCH UPDATES



FALL KICK-OFF
WORSHIP & MEAL
SUNDAY, AUGUST 16
10:45am
One Service & Lots of Fun!
 carmelumc.org CARMEL CHURCH
 621 S. Rangeline Rd, Carmel, IN



Hospitality Team Needs You!

GREETERS & WELCOME CENTER HOSTS

Stop by the **WELCOME DESK** if you are interested.

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 06/30/2026)
\$ 715,878

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

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

Missions Budget (through 06/30/2026).

Total MISSIONS Contribution Income	\$	98,796
Total MISSIONS Grants from outside sources	\$	22,816

Joys & Concerns

With Sympathy to the family & friends of...

- **Glenn Zech** who passed away on **June 18, 2026**
- **Melissa Witecha** who passed away on **June 10, 2026** (She was our receptionist recently at CUMC in 2024-2025)



PRAYER CONCERNS

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

GROUP Meetings for JULY

- **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
- **EMPTY NESTERS** —We meet on **Sunday mornings at 9:00am in the conference room** and we always welcome new members! Contact Katie Kessler with any questions at gmacovi@aol.com
- **DINNER BELLES**—are meeting at Bru Burger in Carmel on **July 14 at 6pm!** Contact: Kay Kayhapner@yahoo.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
- **RUTH ANNA CIRCLE**—is not meeting in July. We will meet after the summer break on Tuesday, **September 8 at 10AM**. Stay tuned for more information.
- **LYDIA CIRCLE** —is not meeting in July. We will meet after the summer break in August or September. Stay tuned for more information.

If you would like YOUR group to be included here, send an email to **Jennifer Warf** jwarf@carmelumc.org

Article written by **Dave Coleman**

Carmel UMC Food Pantry: Feeding Neighbors, Building Community

Since 1992, the Carmel United Methodist Church (CUMC) Food Pantry has been a pillar of support for Hamilton County families facing food insecurity. Located at 621 S. Rangeline Road, the pantry serves more than 300 families each month, providing nutritional food and hygiene items to those in need.

The Food Pantry is staffed by more than 100 dedicated volunteers from throughout the community. Volunteers keep the pantry running smoothly by stocking shelves, shopping for food items, picking up rescue food, cleaning the facility, and personally assisting guests with their food selections.

The pantry's impact is further demonstrated by strong local and corporate partnerships. Generous contributions of food and produce are received from partners, including Panera Bread, Einstein Bros. Bagels, The Fresh Market and Niemann's Harvest Market, ensuring that guests have access to a variety of quality food options.

During the growing season, the pantry's offerings get a boost with fresh vegetables and herbs. This produce is harvested from the CUMC Food Pantry Garden as well as an array of generous local green spaces, including the Hamilton County Master Gardeners Giving Garden, St. Christopher Episcopal Church's CROP, Cornerstone Lutheran Church, Carmel Christian Church, Christ Lutheran and Noblesville First UMC.

There is a wide network of community partners which help stock the pantry's shelves. These partners include the Hamilton County Harvest Food Bank, Meijer (through its Simply Give program), Shepherd's Gate Food Pantry, Fishers UMC Food Pantry, St. Mark's UMC, Orchard Park Presbyterian Church, the Carmel Rotary Club, and the Carmel Lions Club.

At the CUMC Food Pantry, volunteers have seen firsthand how a bag of groceries can bring hope to a family during a tough time. The pantry isn't just feeding people. It's building a community where neighbors look out for neighbors.

Get Involved: The pantry is always looking for volunteers and new collaborations to help sustain its mission. If you are interested in volunteering your time or becoming a community partner, please contact Cindy Muse at foodpantry@carmelumc.org.

JULY FOOD PANTRY CHALLENGE Donate CANS & Enter the CONTEST!!

We are having a contest featuring two very popular items at the food pantry: **Canned Meat & Fruit**. There will be two green carts in the Gathering Place to collect the **Canned Meat vs. the Canned Fruit**. Stop by the Welcome Desk and **fill out an entry form** guessing how many of each item we will collect by July 26, and the closest guess for each item will win a prize! **One entry for each item per person.**



RAINFOREST FALLS VBS Missions Success

In June, our VBS Campers helped pack:

- Bags of Hope - 143 Toiletry kits and notes
- Midwest Missions - 60 Tornado kits for Midwest Missions, 10 boxes donated new and used school supplies.
- CUMC Food Pantry - 150 Beef and Bean Enchilada kits & 150 Celebration kits with cards
- Family Promise HC & GI - 50 of each kit
- Congregational Care - Made Greeting Cards



Praise God for the return of our Henderson team and the great work they were able to do during their mission trip in June! (more photos on next page).



CUMC Coats were delivered to the Henderson Thrift Shop!

We are still working on **weaving plarn sleeping mats** for Soups On and need your help we have 3 done out of 10 needed. You can join us at **Independence Village** July 9th & 23rd 10:30-11:30, come weave at the church Thursday July 16th at 10:30am or Friday July 31st at 10:00am.



Come join our Wednesday group to sew, cut or iron bags for Midwest Missions Education Kits

July 8th 10:30am & July 22nd 10:30am



Family Promise of Greater Indianapolis needs volunteers Saturday July 11th to help host a Back to School Event for their families. 11:00am - 1:00pm



Sign up here:

Join the CUMC team on August 17th at Fox Prairie Golf Course. Send email to missions@carmelumc.org for your spot

Family Promise of Hamilton County

Fairways Fore Families

August 17,

BAGS OF HOPE INDIANA'S

PICKLEBALL FUNDRAISER

TO SUPPORT FOSTER YOUTH IN INDIANA

FRIDAY, JULY 31

CARMEL RACQUET CLUB

5:00-9:00 PM

GENERAL PLAY:
\$25 PER PLAYER
\$50 PER FAMILY (HOUSEHOLD)
PRICE INCLUDES PIZZA + NON-ALCOHOLIC DRINKS

ADULT ROUND ROBIN:
\$20 PER PLAYER

KIDS TOURNAMENT 18 + UNDER:
\$5 PER PLAYER

GENERAL PLAY:	ROUND ROBIN:	KIDS BRACKET:

REGISTER EARLY, SPACE IS LIMITED
PAY AT THE DOOR: CASH, CHECK, OR PAYPAL ACCEPTED

QUESTIONS OR WANT TO SPONSOR? BAGSOFHOPe.IN@GMAIL.COM

HENDERSON

If you followed the progress on our CUMC Facebook page, here are photos of the completed handiwork of our Henderson Settlement mission crew: Eric Ayers, Chris Dobie, Wayne Lerner, Carl Lewis, Al Moss, Jeff Silvius, Chris Wilcox and Will Wingfield.



This year, the team built a new porch off the homeowners' bedroom and a new storage shed on the foundation of house, which was previously demolished. With minimal demo and foundation work, both went up quickly. The roof for the porch, however, required stabilization to make it safe to install the red aluminum roofing to match the existing home.

As in previous years, another crew will come later to add siding and finishing touches to the shed. A new addition this year were boards in between the trusses to keep birds from entering the eaves.

The homeowner had well over 100 farm animals including dogs, goats and ducks. But there were more chickens, which tried to nest everywhere, including inside Wayne's and Eric's trucks!



Christmas in July: Christmas Cantata Craft Workshop

with Costume Designer & Maker, Barry Doss

Article by Ray Lahrman

Our **Christmas in July: Cantata Craft Workshops** are just around the corner! Costume Designer & Maker **Barry Doss** returns to Carmel United Methodist Church to continue creating and refining the beautiful Broadway-style costumes that will be featured in this year's Christmas Cantata. We have made tremendous progress, and now we need your help adding the finishing touches—including sewing, hand stitching, attaching hooks and clasps, embellishing costumes with jewels and trim, and preparing new costume pieces for future productions.

Workshops will be held on **Saturday, July 18** and **Saturday, July 25**, from **9:00**

AM–5:00 PM. Lunch will be provided, and volunteers are welcome to participate for as little or as much of the day as they are able. **No previous sewing or crafting experience is necessary!** Whether you're an experienced seamstress or simply know how to sew on a button, there will be meaningful ways for everyone to contribute.

Please sign up by Monday, July 13, so we can prepare enough workstations, supplies, and lunches for everyone attending. When signing up, please indicate which workshop date(s) you plan to attend, approximately what time you expect to arrive, and how long you anticipate staying. Look for the **Christmas in July: Cantata Craft Workshop** Event Sign-Up on the church website: <https://carmelumc.org/events/>

Come be part of this unique ministry as we prepare costumes that will enrich our Christmas Cantata for many years to come. We hope you'll join us for one—or both—of these exciting workshop days!

A promotional poster for the 'Christmas in July! Cantata Craft Workshop'. The poster features three men in ornate, gold and blue costumes with crowns. The text on the poster includes: 'CHRISTMAS in JULY!', 'CANTATA CRAFT WORKSHOP', 'WITH COSTUME DESIGNER & MAKER Barry Doss', 'HELP CREATE BEAUTIFUL COSTUMES FOR OUR CHRISTMAS CANTATA!', 'SEWING & STITCHING', 'CLASPS & HOOKS', 'BEADING & EMBELLISHING', 'ALL SKILL LEVELS WELCOME!', 'SATURDAY JULY 18', 'SATURDAY JULY 25', '9:00 AM - 5:00 PM', and 'LUNCH PROVIDED! COME FOR A LITTLE OR STAY ALL DAY!'. At the bottom, it says 'CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP & JOIN US!' and 'HELP BRING OUR CHRISTMAS CANTATA TO LIFE!'.



CHILDRENS MINISTRY

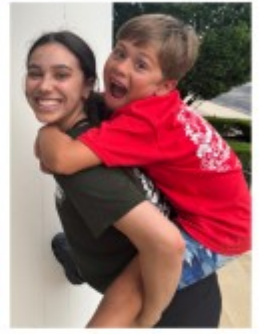
Shaina Murphy • smurphy@carmelumc.org



VBS

VERY BEST SUMMER

CARMEL
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH
carmelumc.org/kids



God is forever.





looking ahead...

2027 VBS
June 14-18

CRAVE
Stirring Up a Hunger for Jesus



Summer Sunday School
Ends Sunday August 9

Back Pack Blessing
August 9 during Worship

Regular Sunday School
Begins August 23

No Sunday School (Holiday)
Sunday September 6

Preschool in Session
Wednesday August 26

2nd & 3rd Grade Bibles
Sunday August 30

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)

ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Rev. Jessica Stevens • jstevens@carmelumc.org

QUILTERS CORNER

Written by Jessica Stevens

Our quilting group gathers each week not simply to make quilts, but to share fellowship and use their gifts to bless others.

Recently, the group began a wonderful partnership with Irvington United Methodist Church. Marie Harris and her husband, Chuck, made the trip to Irvington to pick up 24 quilts that are ready to be tied. While they were there, they received a tour of the church's quilting workspace in the attic and experienced the warm hospitality of everyone they met.

Over the coming weeks, our quilting group will gather each Friday morning to tie all 24 quilts before returning them to Irvington. It is a beautiful example of two congregations working together, each contributing their unique gifts to a shared ministry of care.

Quilts have long been symbols of comfort, warmth, and love. Every knot that is tied represents time freely given, prayers quietly offered, and hands willing to serve. What may seem like a simple task becomes an act of compassion that reaches far beyond the walls of our church.



Quilters pictured (left to right) are: Jan Prestholt, Lynn Enstrom, Diane Ohde, and Marie Harris. They are holding some small quilts that they have tied for Irvington, UMC


Partnerships like this remind us that ministry is rarely something we do alone. When churches join together, the work becomes lighter, relationships grow stronger, and God's love reaches even more people.

We are grateful for our quilting ministry, for the new friendships being formed with Irvington United Methodist Church, and for everyone who faithfully gathers each week to transform fabric and thread into a tangible expression of Christ's love. Please keep these volunteers—and all who will one day receive these quilts—in your prayers as this meaningful ministry continues.



 **Dinner Belles**
are MEETING at
Bru Burger
in Carmel at 6:00pm
on Tuesday July 14, 2026
Questions? Kay Hapner - kayhapner@yahoo.com



QUILTING
Quilting Circle 

Fridays 9-30am-12pm
at Carmel UMC in room LL 23.

We welcome anyone who wants to quilt or tie,
or anyone who wants to learn.

CONTACT Marie Harris at mdrharris@aol.com

NEXT Meeting:
Tuesday Sept. 8
10:00am in the
Gathering Place

 **Ruth Anna**
Circle

Program:
To Be Announced



Summer: A Season of Growth

Summer has a way of changing the rhythm of life. School assignments give way to family vacations, campfires replace classrooms, and for many students, the pressure of grades, practices, and packed schedules begins to loosen its grip. It is also one of the seasons God often uses most powerfully to shape the hearts of young people.

This June, our middle school students experienced that firsthand at Camp Adventure. For one week, they stepped away from the routines that so often define their lives and into a community centered on faith, friendship, and fun. In a culture increasingly shaped by screens and constant digital connection—a challenge highlighted in our church's summer read, *The Anxious Generation*—students discovered something different. Friendship bracelets replaced homework. Camp songs replaced notifications. Conversations around cabin tables replaced scrolling on phones.

Perhaps the most meaningful moments were the simplest ones. Students who are often quiet found confidence to laugh, sing, and dance without worrying who was watching. Hair gel was forgotten. Appearances mattered less than belonging. For a few beautiful days, they experienced the kind of freedom that comes from being fully known, fully accepted, and surrounded by a Spirit-filled community. It is a reminder that Christ

doesn't simply call us away from something; He calls us into a life marked by joy, belonging, and abundant grace.

Now our attention turns to our high school students as they prepare for **Mission Puerto Rico, July 11–17**. Throughout the week they will partner with local churches by helping lead Vacation Bible School and serving neighbors through light home repair and painting projects. These students will have the opportunity to become the hands and feet of Christ, sharing God's love not only through words, but through acts of compassion and service.

As they go, we invite our church family to join us in prayer. Pray that our students would continue to grow in faith, build lasting friendships, serve with humility, and return home with a deeper understanding of God's love for them and for the world. Thank you for the many ways you continue to encourage, support, and pray for the next generation. Your investment is helping shape young disciples whose faith will continue to grow long after summer has ended.



Contact Rick:
rbelbutoski@carmelumc.org

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

We're looking for help to feed our youth group this summer.

We're gathering on Wednesday nights at church and you can help set the table for connection.

Go to carmelumc.org/youth to SIGN UP to donate.



Join us in celebrating the way God moved in the lives of our middle schoolers at Camp Adventure last month.

YOUTH
—ministries—
Carmel UMC



The Carmel youth and their friends are invited to join in the summer fun of Carmel UMC youth pizza tour.

We'll be visiting 5 locally owned pizza spots this summer, to enjoy food and friends, but also review the best slices in the area.

We will continue our tour at Greek Tony's in Carmel on Monday July 6 at 6 pm. No RSVP required.

Some food provided, bring cash if you want your own order.

Written by Will Wingfield

Bid Selected for New FLC Heating and Cooling System

CUMC's Board of Trustees has selected Ellis Mechanical Inc. to install an all-new heating and cooling system serving our Jack King Family Life Center (FLC). It replaces a temporary heating system used for the FLC this winter and spring, after the original system broke in December.

Advanced Engineering Consultants assisted CUMC in seeking proposals from qualified Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) contractors, and three ranged in price from \$173,500 to \$268,000.

This will be the largest single contract so far under our Renovate & Elevate Capital Campaign, but larger HVAC projects are expected in the future. Large projects like this could only occur with the generous commitments and gifts of our Capital Campaign donors – thank you!

Ellis expects to use a crane to install a unit that packages a gas furnace, air conditioning (AC) and fresh air into one unit. It will be placed among the existing AC compressors behind the white privacy fencing, between the FLC and the Preschool playground, with ductwork routed up into building.



This solution will allow the aging AC system to continue operating this summer and fall from the mechanical room by the second-floor Preschool restrooms.

Due to the long lead time for ordering equipment, installation of the new HVAC system is expected by late fall. We're fast tracking this project to avoid another temporary heating solution! There will be a short changeover period while the aging AC system is removed and the new HVAC package unit is connected.

Pardon Construction Dust in Northwest Basement Classrooms

Before a sump pump was added last year to the remodeled "Rec Room" in our northwest basement, beneath the Chapel, storm water would flood into a neighboring room that was used mostly for storage.

Starting this month, this room and the basement childcare room next door are being transformed with new carpet and paint. It will allow the creation of a children's room for hands-on Biblical learning, which will be different than our typical classrooms.

Please pardon the crews and dust during construction! An emergency exit door is also being added between the two rooms for improved life safety.

Celebrating a Faithful First Year

As we complete the first year of our 3 year Renovate and Elevate Capital Campaign, we pause with grateful hearts to celebrate God's blessings and the outstanding response from our congregation. Through your generous giving, earnest prayers and a shared commitment to the future of Carmel United Methodist Church, we have completed an eventful year. Hopefully you had a chance to join us on June 28 as we celebrated this accomplishment prior to the worship services (The cake was delicious !)

To date we are close to reaching 60% of our \$2.5 million financial commitment! That is a wonderful response particularly in these challenging times. The Church Staff and Trustees have used these resources to complete projects big and small that elevate our spaces and enhance the ministries to our congregation and the greater Carmel community. We've been fortunate to have been able to address emergency situations with an eye for longer term solutions without impacting our normal Operating Budget.

We are thankful for all who have participated in this endeavor, but recognize that this campaign is not simply about buildings improvements or projects, but also about creating opportunities to serve Christ and share His love with our community. We hope that you've taken this year to reflect on the question "God, what do You want to do through me?". Perhaps it has led you to volunteer in one of our ministries or missions. Or maybe attend a new Bible study class or a recommitment to attending Worship services on a regular basis. A closer relationship to God through service and prayer is a hallmark of United Methodists and I'm proud to be a part of that heritage.



As we enter the second year of our campaign, let's continue to move forward together in prayer, gratitude and joyful expectations (and improved Heating and Cooling systems!). Thank you to everyone who has contributed though gifts, service, prayer and involvement. And it's never too late to join the party. If you'd like to make a pledge or a one time financial contribution, please use a Capital Campaign envelop in the pews or pick up a Pledge card in our red tool box in the Gathering Place.

Please know that the seeds we are planting today will bless future generations and strengthen the ministry of our church for years to come.

The Video of our Sanctuary Update meeting on May 31, 2026 is posted on our Capital Campaign website at:

carmelumc.org/capitalcampaign





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E-mail: caremail@carmelumc.org
carmelumc.org

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

JULY 2026



CHECK INSIDE FOR UPCOMING EVENTS

LOOK INSIDE

for more information about all the happenings at CUMC!

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