

Thank You, Donors and Cooks!



For many years Carmel has supported Caring For Friends (formerly Aid for Friends). The CFF food bank and senior meals program, with the help of thousands of volunteers, are driven by the organization’s mission to provide food and friendship to seniors, kids and families in the five counties of Greater Philadelphia.

Hunger is particularly problematic in this region. According to a recent report released by the non-profit Hunger Free America, although hunger has decreased across most of the United States over the last several years, the number of people facing hunger in Philadelphia has actually increased by 22%. About 18.3% of Philadelphia residents lived in households that were characterized by the government as “food insecure.”

In recent months, because of coronavirus and related unemployment, need has skyrocketed further. CFF is now helping to secure food for



over 100,000 households through our food bank and over 5,500 seniors with our meal delivery program. Each Carmel's semi-annual Cook-In benefits the seniors meals delivery program.

As a *Christ Is Calling* outreach mission supported by Carmel Deacons, a non-traditional “Cook-In” was conducted in late July, timed to coincide with this year’s “Compassion Camp” virtual VBS.



What a perfect connection and practical application of VBS lessons that centered on compassion for others, ourselves and the world!

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, access to Carmel’s kitchen for the usual cook-ahead and cafeteria-line meal assembly wasn’t permitted. It was replaced by a 3-step process with multiple ways to contribute, built-in time flexibility and encouraged kid-participation.



Step 1: Drop-off of specific canned, boxed and bagged goods donations.

Step 2: Distribution of “Cook’s Bags,” including donated items along with in structions, supplies and PPE (masks and gloves), to a dozen individuals and families, each preparing a dozen meal trays in their own kitchens by adding the entree, labels and love!

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Update on Church Re-Opening

We hope you are well and are able to join us for Zoom worship on Sundays and Science Touches Christianity with Mr. Eric on Thursdays. If you are not already getting Zoom invitations, please contact Mary Kate at office.presbycarmel.org and ask to be added to her email list.

Session has again voted to suspend our in-person worship through September. The reason is that we need to be able to stream and Zoom our services so that you can continue to participate from home, and our technology in the sanctuary isn't there yet. We are getting estimates from tech companies, but they are backed up because many churches are requesting the same service. So, we must wait our turn.

Meanwhile, AA has returned to Carmel for in-person meetings on Thursday nights in Carmel Hall (masked and distanced). The Hispanic Church has returned at their regular times (limit 25 worshipers, masked, distanced, no singing.) The Korean Church has returned to broadcasting from the chapel on Sunday afternoons. Slowly and carefully life is returning to Carmel. We look forward to the time when we can all worship in person together.

If you have any thoughts or questions, please feel free to contact Lynne Schutt. —*Lynne Schutt*



RALLY DAY

is coming: New time,
new format

Food, fun, and safe social gathering

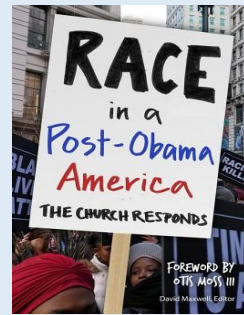
Stay tuned for forthcoming details

Your Congregational Life and
Christian Education Committees



Carmel Nursery School News

Carmel Nursery School will not open its doors this September due to a lack of students and teachers. We have considered all of our options and have decided that we will re-evaluate the situation after Thanksgiving. We will continue to work towards opening in person at that time, if it is feasible. We will continue to reach out to our families to let them know what our plans are. We will also be reaching out to our children to let them know we are still here, we are still thinking about them, we miss them, and we can't wait to see them again. —*Leslie Arrowsmith*



Understanding Racism Class

A fall adult education class, “Racism: Understanding and Response,” will examine this important issue which has been the focus of so much national attention this summer. The class will begin on September 20 and 23. Pastors Peter Sulyok and Ashley Rossi will co-lead the class along with anticipated guest speakers and the use of various forms of media. Pastor Peter will lead off the course, using a Presbyterian publishing text, “Race in a Post-Obama America: The Church Responds”—an introductory resource to provide definitions, Biblical understanding and the history of racism.

The class will be offered online via ZOOM at two different time periods, Sunday mornings from 9:00-9:45 AM and Wednesday evenings from 8:00-9:00 PM. Opening sessions will define terms such as culture, ethnicity, race, and nationality; take a look at the Bible and racism, examine the 2020 PC(USA) General Assembly resolution, and review U.S. historical background. A more specific book study will follow in November. The course will also look at issues of racism today, including systemic racism, white privilege, anti-racism, racial justice/police brutality, and the church’s response.

Copies of the paperback text are available for course participants. Most of the book’s contributors are pastors, seminary professors and editors. E-mail the church office and arrange a pick-up time. If this is not possible for you, some drop-offs could be made. More books will be ordered as needed.

We hope that you can join us for an in-depth look, attempt for greater understanding, and examination of how the church can respond to this very important issue facing today’s America.

—*Janet Simon, Christian Education Chairperson*



This month’s editor:
Mary Kate Nolen
Next Courier deadline:
September 13

From the Transitional Pastor's Study

As a Transitional Ministry we've had an **unusual** startup!

Our **Transitional Ministry** began just a few weeks into what was then a spiraling coronavirus pandemic. All of us were trying to make sense of our new "church" situation. We adapted. We wear masks. We wash and disinfect our hands. We social distance. We adjust our worship weekly on Zoom/Facebook live to best worship God and nurture our church family. We rejoice when folks who live at a distance or in retirement homes are able now to regularly "attend" worship. Our **Technology Task Force** advances to prepare live streaming worship in the sanctuary so when we are safely able to worship physically together, **all** of us will be able to participate—whether at a distance, in a nursing home, or homebound. Our Re-Opening Committee has issued guidelines for when we do gather again for sanctuary worship and use of the building. We held Virtual Vacation Bible School and found ways CE can move forward to fall Sunday School.

And, we held "**Meet the Pastor**" **Virtual Meetings** for each of our twelve local districts over a six-week period. But it was **more** than meeting "the pastor" as I was able to meet many of you thanks to our Congregational Life Committee and our Shepherds, Deacons and Elders. These small group gatherings were of great value to me; I finally got to meet all of you face-to-face, connect faces with stories—stories with how the **Carmel Presbyterian Church** family has played a role in your past, a sense of where you are now, and some of the hopes you have for the future. These conversations were very meaningful to me as coffee hour conversations have not been possible!

I would like to share some of what I learned—and I'm sure none of it is new-to-you! Our 12 gatherings were very informal and lasted pretty much an hour each (as promised!). We started off with each of us sharing what experience—remembering your entire experience at Carmel Presbyterian Church—made you most alive, most motivated and excited about your involve-

ment? Through the many responses I was able to hear what many of you value most about Carmel and the activities or ways of life that are important to you; basically, the best features of this congregation! I'd share some of my story and background and my family members. Then we'd usually close by making three (or more) wishes for the future of the church.

I'll try to paint a picture of what I heard from you—knowing this will be a composite portrait rather than a tell-all mural. The major color of your portrait emphasizes how important relationships have been to many of you over the years. Indeed, in a number of the gatherings I would hear, "**relationships are key**", and there would be a lot of nodding in agreement. I was struck by how many of our "senior members" were able to relate how Carmel is a place where they were baptized, attended Sunday School, enjoyed an enriching youth ministry program, married and called to leadership serving on various boards. I also picked up on what I might call a nostalgia for the past—not in the sense of wanting to go back to the "good old days", rather wanting the same meaningful experiences to be part of today's children and youth. **Participation in youth ministry** has been another key to understanding what is meaningful to many.

I also heard many express a sense of **love for local ministry** and the desire to become more involved in new ways. Carmel's building has been a resource for the community to use with "Meals-on-Wheels" currently staging meals from our kitchen—one group that continues to use the building even while officially the building is closed due to the pandemic. We're pleased to house a Korean congregation's internet service from our chapel and nesting a Hispanic congregation, and, of course the Carmel Preschool. Over the years the congregation has been very supportive of progressive local ministries. I heard a strong desire to discover how to better serve those in our immediate community with "hands-on" types of mission.

See **PETER** Page 7

Wednesdays in the Word

"Wednesdays in the Word," a virtual weekly Bible study and discussion held Wednesday morning and evening since late March, ended on August 26. The fall adult education offering, "Racism: Understanding and Response," will begin online September 20 and 23 (Sunday morning and Wednesday evening). (See separate article for more information.)

Thank you to Pastor Ashley Rossi and Pastor Peter Sulyok for leading the weekly Bible studies. Appreciation also to Pastor Ashley for conceiving this means of gathering together to study the word and check in on one another during our time of social distancing.

— Janet Simon

CARING from Page 1

Step 3: Return of frozen trays to the Carmel kitchen to be picked up by Caring for Friends. This “new day, new way” approach received rave reviews and requests to continue!

Together, one-dozen families and another one-dozen individuals contributed to preparation of 12-dozen (144) Hispanic cuisine meals for CFF.

THANK YOU to individual cooks, donors and bakers: Katey Schuyler, Nicole Bohlander, Beth Cherry, Carol Moll, Nancy Pinkowicz, Linda MacFarland, Melissa MacFarland, Lynn Dimitri, Jean Badger, Patricia Agbote, Lisa Lent and Janet Simon. We also thank VBS and church FAMILIES that participated, many as cooks: Joelle, Alice, Max & Sarah Stein & neighbors; Maggie, Sonny, JD &



Ashley Rossi; Janel & Awa Dia; Gene & Pat Morris and Maddie & Kelly Sweeney; Abigail, Lydia Lin & Shao Yun Wang; Dick & Mary Ellen Thomas; and, Bob, Rebecca & Julia Lohoefer.
—Bob and Susan Lohoefer, Organizers



Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. [1 Peter 3:8](#)

Over the summer months Session has continued to meet via Zoom to primarily plan and discuss the reopening of Carmel and address other business items. The following is what was accomplished at the August meeting:



The Church Reopening Task Force and Technology Task Force have been actively working on getting the Sanctuary and other church facilities ready to safely reopen for worship. Session approved the installation of Plexiglas shields that will be installed on the pulpit and lectern in both the Sanctuary and the Chapel.

Another key item is the installation of the technology needed to live stream worship so those members of the congregation that are not ready to return to the sanctuary can still participate in worship over the computer or via telephone. The Technology Task Force is actively getting bids. However, until the bidding and installation are complete Session agreed that Worship will continue to be conducted via Zoom and Facebook Live and approved the continued suspension of in person worship through September 30, 2020.

Session approved to postpone the opening of the Nursery School in September. The Nursery School Board will re-evaluate the timing of the opening after Thanksgiving, November 26, 2020. This is in concert with what is being recommended for the Abington School District’s upcoming school season as a result of COVID-19. Session also approved to continue to pay the Nursery School Director during the time the school is closed, as the Director will be needed to

continue with ongoing changes in policy and reopening guidelines, and getting the word out that the school will be opening, when the time comes.

During the last week of July Carmel hosted its first virtual Vacation Bible School Compassion Camp, which ended with an in person social distanced “chalk the lot” event at Carmel’s parking lot. Many thanks to Reverend Rossi and the volunteers that made this unconventional VBS fun and a success.

At the request of the Stewardship Committee, Session approved to send 25% of the Peace & Global Missions collection to POWER (Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower and Rebuild).

As Carmel begins the process of searching for a new Pastor, Session approved Carmel’s participation in the Philadelphia Presbytery’s Vital Congregations Initiative, a two-year venture rooted in vibrant relationships, honest assessment, community-based discernment, and theological and biblical reflection that will empower churches to reclaim their call to Spirit-inspired worship that unleashes their Christ-centered work in the world. Carmel’s participation in this initiative will help guide us as we learn and discover where Carmel wants to be and what we need in a Pastor as Carmel moves into this new phase of our church life.

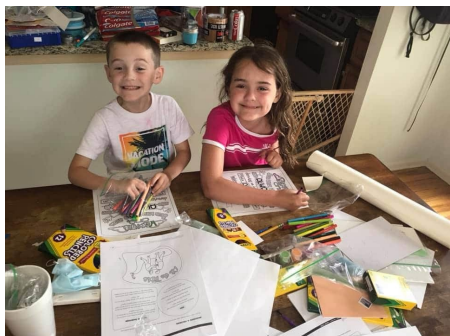
Finally vacation leave was approved for Reverend Rossi from August 29 through September 5, 2020.
—Nancy Pinkowicz, Clerk of Session

Virtual VBS Thank You's



Thanks to the team who planned and led Carmel's fun week of "Compassion Camp" Virtual Vacation Bible School from July 26-30. The campers heard a nightly Bible story by Pastor Ashley Rossi, engaged in craft activities planned by Sarah Stein, discussed in small groups with leaders Jed Smith, Stefanie O'Gara and Venus Agbadan, and did yoga moves with Denise Abraham. Sue Lohoefer was registrar, and Gary Moll helped set up camp.

The campers learned to "Be loved, be kind, be you." "Compassion Camp" taught lessons of empathy and concern through Bible stories and fun activities in a safe at home environment necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. The creators of "Compassion Camp," mostly Presbyterian clergy and educators, planned this virtual VBS in a short time frame to meet churches' unique needs for a safe VBS this summer.



Special appreciation to Pastor Ashley for overall coordination, Bible lessons and technology multi-tasking; Sarah Stein for selecting crafts and producing pre-recorded how-to videos with Joleen, Alice and Max as actors, and to Denise Abraham for leading the children in yoga movement activity each night.

The VBS planning team brainstormed an enjoyable in person closing activity on the Carmel parking lot, "Chalk the Lot" with chalk drawing, soft pretzels and water ice. VBS kids and their families,



team members, and invited congregation members joined together while social distancing. Even the weather postponement to the rain date didn't deter this final happening of Compassion Camp Week.



COVID-19 did not stop Carmel VBS 2020! *"For nothing will be impossible with God."* Luke 1:37

--Janet Simon for the Christian Education Committee



Peace & Global Witness

The Peace & Global Witness (formerly Peacemaking) campaign which runs in September is split three ways. 50% supports the Presbyterian work for peace and reconciliation globally. 25% goes regionally including Presbytery and Synod for peacemaking. The rest goes wherever the local congregation chooses. This year our 25% is headed to POWER with Session approval. POWER is an organization that represents people of faith committed to the work of justice here and now. Some of the programs are the climate justice crisis, opening schools safely, violence prevention, making voting accessible for everyone, mental health intervention, and Interfaith.

Since we are still worshipping remotely, the special envelopes are not available to us. Please send a check, use your credit or debit card on Carmel's website presbycarmel.org, or use your bank's internet bill payment procedure. Be sure to indicate that the funds are for the Peacemaking collection. Dedication will be October 4.

—Anne Newman



 **PEACE & GLOBAL WITNESS**
SPECIAL OFFERINGS
PEACEMAKING AND RECONCILIATION

Fall Sermon Series

Saltiness is Next to Godliness and Fruitful Practices for Hearty Mission



Saltiness Is Next to Godliness! will be Pastor Peter's *CPC Fall Sermon Series* and will explore the *changing church*. The church in North America is *always* changing. **Transitional Ministry** is a time for all of us to take a fresh look at where God's Spirit is moving God's people. It's our opportunity to

discern God's movement in the church and in our community; and then, once we have a sense of that trajectory, we'll examine *five fruitful practices* that make for a *hearty church* along our way.

The *Sermon Series* will ask, what kind of church is emerging and will continue to develop here at the cross-roads of Edge Hill Road and Limekiln Pike? We might say the current church trajectory probably began in the 1960s as the members at the time showed they did not want to be the church of the 1950s. They wanted to do their own thing, or not. How do we **be** church in today's world, nation, our community, and in our congregation itself? Join Pastor Peter as together we wrestle with these questions and the Biblical stories that shape and continue to nurture our lives and our church. The *Sermon Series* will be one way we begin our *Transitional Ministry Church Study* to give direction to our *Pastor Nominating Committee* once they are elected.

The Fall Sermon Series **Saltiness Is Next to Godliness!** will be divided into two clusters of sermons. The *first cluster* will explore, what is happening in church life around us and how do we engage? We will examine trends shaping the church of tomorrow and see how Carmel might benefit as it moves forward in mission. Beginning on September 20-October 11, the four sermons include:

September 20: Let Go of Church—As We Know It!
 September 27: Spread Good News!
 October 4: Nurture Community!
 October 11: Do Church Differently!

The *second cluster* will examine five practices that are marks of a healthy congregation utilizing a book *Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations*. Following the five practices in the book, Pastor Peter will shape them into this second half of the Sermon Series. Beginning on October 18, the sermons will include the following five sermon topics:

October 18: Radical Hospitality
 October 25: Passionate Worship
 November 1: Intentional Faith Development
 November 8: Risk-Taking Mission and Service
 November 15: Extravagant Generosity

The sermons will be laid out in a brief, concise and stark way to promote our conversation. Mark your calendars and follow the whole series, as each sermon will build upon the previous! In the end we hope to be a saltier people—closer to God and each other—and with a clearer sense of where our *Transitional Ministry* will lead us.

—Pastor Peter



Congratulations to Taylor Tolton and Tom Kain, who were wed in an intimate ceremony at Carmel on August 8th, officiated by Pastor Ashley. Best wishes and blessings as you begin your life together!



Happy Golden Anniversary!

Happy Golden Anniversary to **Joe and Nancy O'Brien**, who will be married 50 years on September 12th! Congratulations!



Happy Birthday!

Jean Oberholtzer, who will turn 96 on September 21st

and

Jean Badger, who will turn 91 on September 21st

Enjoy your special days!

PETER from Page 3

In a couple of the meetings newer members shared their story in selecting Carmel as their church family. After visiting a number of congregations, Carmel was determined to be the friendliest and most actively welcoming congregation. They shared how they were both warmly welcomed and quickly integrated into the leadership. This is a strength that I'm sure we'll want to examine to see ways of making sure all angles are covered and new people find a home and meaningful service.

Finally, we have a strong history with the Presbytery of Philadelphia and the denomination supporting their work and mission. We have welcomed the opportunity to serve the Presbytery with our facility as host to their programs and activities. And it was noted that Pastor Ashley is currently the Vice-Moderator of the Presbytery. This sense of connection is good and strong within the congregation I learned.

I shared these insights and learnings from the "Meet and Greet" Virtual gatherings with Session at our most recent meeting and promised I would write them down. I thought "Notes from the Transitional Pastor's Study" is a good place to share them. Please let me know your thoughts on these insights. Of course, the portrait just painted doesn't cover everything, but it was very helpful for me as I grew in understanding who you are and directions for your future.

One of the many strengths of Carmel that I have come to appreciate—not only from the gatherings, but also from meeting with your Boards—is your **strong sense of ownership** of the church. You are responsible for everything our church is and does. The following poem (from an unknown author) captures your strong sense of stewardship of Carmel:

This is **my** church.
It is composed of people like me.

We make it what it is.
It will be friendly if I am friendly.
Its pews will be filled if I help to fill them.
It will do good work if I work.
It will make generous gifts to many causes
if I am a generous giver.
It will be a church of loyalty and love,
of justice and faith,
and a church of noble spirit if I,
who make it what it is,
am filled with these.
Therefore, I shall dedicate myself
to the task of being all things
I want my church to be.

As I have met many of you and worked with you on various committees and boards, **this poem both describes and guides** many of our members and I'm sure they can guide more. Of course, CPC is ours only because God each day gives it to us as our part of the Body of Christ. First and foremost, Carmel is Christ's church. **Only** when we are fully dedicated to Jesus is our church really "my" church.

Please email me and share your thoughts on my summary of the "Meet and Greet" gatherings. Also, I invite you to contact me with any updates or concerns. Our Transitional/Interim Ministry is the time to reflect, and deal with, issues of grief, endings, trust, congregational identity, expectations for the future, and new beginnings. Do not hesitate to call me and we can arrange a phone call or zoom call and begin or continue a conversation. My phone is: 502-767-8104 and email: peter-sulyok@aol.com.

Stay safe!

Grace and peace,

Peter Sulyok



A Note from the Director of Music

It is so wonderful to be together virtually each Sunday morning during this pandemic. I am very grateful to everyone who has sung at our online worship services. Thank you so much for your gifts of music. If anyone would like to sing at our offertory or play an instrument please let me know. Music training over Zoom is available for anyone who would like to add their voice to our worship time.

As you know, singing right now is considered a super spreader. I am looking forward to the day that we can gather safely and the day that there is a successful vaccine that has been developed and distributed.

A hymn that comforts me often has the text "His eye is on the sparrow, and I know he watches me." This hymn is based on Matthew 6:26 "Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

May God be with you and bless you and give you peace.

Abby Palmisano

Director of Music and Organist

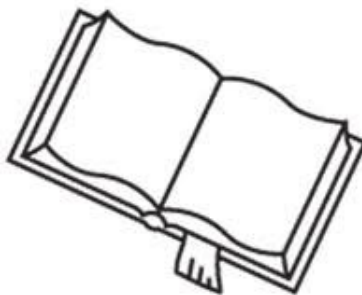
September Lectionary

September 6, 2020—Communion

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 149
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

September 13, 2020

Exodus 14:19-31
Psalm 114 or Exodus 15:1b-11, 20-21
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35



September 20, 2020

Exodus 16:2-15
Psalm 105
Philippians 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

September 27, 2020

Exodus 17:1-7
Psalm 78
Philippians 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32



Thank you to the congregation for all the support during Gene’s recent hospitalization and recuperation. The meals provided by Melissa Deacon and Carol Moll were delicious and much appreciated. All your prayers and support were really appreciated. Special thanks to Pastor Peter for his calls. Carmel is truly a caring congregation!

~ Gene and Pat Morris

Congratulations

Congratulations to **Valerie Santangelo**! She recently passed her state boards and is now an official Doctor of Physical Therapy.

Sophia Ann McKee, daughter of **Devon and Jennifer McKee**, granddaughter of **John and Beth Santangelo** and great-granddaughter of **Gene and Pat Morris**, arrived on August 11th. Congratulations on the newest addition to your family!



Please keep **Ruth Kucera** in your prayers as she recuperates after eye surgery; and **Sophia Ann McKee**, great-granddaughter of **Gene and Pat Morris**, who is now home after spending several days at CHOP.

Upcoming Dates

- Labor Day, September 7, 2020
- Patriot Day, September 11, 2020
- National Grandparents Day, September 13, 2020
- Hispanic Heritage Month, September 15—October 15
- International Day of Peace, September 21, 2020
- First Day of Autumn, September 22, 2020

