

TRANSITIONAL MINISTRY TO HOST U.S. CONGREGATIONAL VITALITY SURVEY MID-OCTOBER...

The **Carmel Transitional Ministry Team** will host the **U.S. Congregational Vitality Survey (USCVS)** as part of the on-going **Mission Study**. The survey will help Carmel understand the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of worshipers and leaders in our congregation. The USCVS consists of a single survey, designed to be taken by anyone who worships at Carmel on a regular basis (be they members, staff, or friends of the church).



The results will be another set of information and discernment helping Carmel to understand **who** we are and **where** we want to go! But, let's get this out of the way—the USCVS is **not** a test. There are no right or wrong answers.

Rather, the survey is designed to help Carmel assess our strengths based on the **seven marks of congregational vitality**—discipleship, outward focus, evangelism, servant leadership, worship, caring relationships, and ecclesial health. These seven marks of congregational vitality were the focus of Carmel's seven **Mission Study Discussions** held in the Spring—each followed by a sermon from the **Sermon Series** offered by Pastor Peter—and the notes from these meetings are currently being discussed with next steps by the

Transitional Ministry Team. Carmel will offer the survey in **two ways** with preference given to the first:

- **Sunday, October 17th**—in the sanctuary—immediately following a shortened worship. Copies of the worshiper survey will be distributed and completed in the pew and collected; and
- To reach people who do not attend worship, we will also offer an **online version** of the worshiper survey.

The USCVS has helped congregations measure their vitality since 2001. It was created through a collaboration between sociologists, theologians, and Christian educators in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Framing this discernment as a form of worship, the Transitional Ministry Team hopes to help Carmel members focus their hearts and minds upon the truth of Jesus Christ, and to see that God is in control of the process. We hope this may help Carmelites be more authentic in their reflections; something that is essential for personal growth and for our future ministry with our new Senior Pastor. Consider the wise words of Henri Nouwen:

“Holding the cup of life means looking critically at what we are living. This requires great courage, because when we start looking, we might be terrified by what we see.... Still, we intuitively know that without looking at life critically we lose our vision and our direction. When we drink the cup without holding it first, we may simply get drunk

and wander around aimlessly.”

The anonymous surveys will be gathered and sent to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s Research Services at the Louisville offices and—about four weeks after Carmel returns its completed surveys—the Transitional Ministry Team will receive a **Congregational Vitality Report**.

We hope to dedicate a leadership meeting (TBA) to review the results for all questions that measure each mark. Putting these pieces together will help Carmel see our unique strengths. It is up to the Transitional Ministry Team and others in the congregation to interpret the findings in light of what we know about the congregation and other tools we are utilizing—where it is located, how it is changing, and where it is going.

Mark Sunday, October 17, 2021 following a shortened worship so you can be present to complete your copy of the survey. We look forward to celebrate Carmel's strengths as a congregation at a gathering TBA. More details will be forthcoming in our weekly Email with worship.
—Pastor Peter

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Harvest Festival

Sunday, October 31st

Please join us immediately following worship for a harvest-inspired lunch!

Festival

A Congregational Life Event



Coming up!

Refuge: for grades 3-8

Starting October 20, 6:30-7:30 pm

Oasis: for grades 9-12,

Starting October 3, 7:00 - 8:00 pm

We hope to see you there!

More details to follow

Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them



DEUTERONOMY 6:6-7, NRSV

Join Our Adult Class!!



It's not too late to join our adult class, "Welcome All," a study of the Biblical practice of hospitality, meeting Sunday mornings from 9:00-9:45 AM in the Fellowship Lounge through October 10. Pastor Peter Sulyok leads the class.

The 4-week class is part of the new Presbyterian curriculum, "Follow Me: Biblical Practices for Faithful Living." The third and fourth sessions present *Know Your Gifts*, a consideration of people's differing gifts for offering hospitality as shown in the actions of Mary and Martha, and *Challenge Othering*, thinking about how to make space to welcome those who might otherwise be excluded from our hospitality.

The Christian practice of hospitality emerges from an understanding that we are all welcomed to this world by God. Jesus showed hospitality to saints as well as sinners, to the chosen 12, to outcasts, orphans, widows, and tax collectors. By his words and actions, Jesus affirmed the value of each person he encountered and counted them among God's beloved children. Likewise Jesus welcomes us while calling us to recognize and welcome the spirit of Christ in one another. --Janet Simon, Christian Education Committee



A Note From Transitional Pastor Peter...

Grace is Present in Conversations We Have

Dear Friends,

One of the things I **welcome** with the return of in-person worship is conversations at the door. It just **doesn't** happen with live-streaming! For instance, a few Sundays back my sermon touched on God's **grace**. Whenever I lift up that key aspect of **God's love for us**, as I greet folks at the door, someone will say, "Thanks! Now I understand grace in a new way!"

But that's only half of it!

For others, nevertheless, a sermon on "grace"—all by itself—can leave another person walking out, quietly thinking, "That sermon didn't deal with anything concrete; I have nothing to take away!"

And that's the "preachers' dilemma. Or, at least **one** of the dilemmas!

What's behind both ways of thinking is that some folks gravitate more towards the **reflection/then action** side of a continuum while others to the **action/then reflection** side. Of course, I've learned **no** sermon speaks to everyone—at least not in the **same** way! And, as much as a I might try to balance the **action/reflection** with **reflection/action** approaches, some sermons just tend to lean **further** to one side than the other.



As to the "grace" sermon, by its very nature it moves to the reflection side even though—in our Presbyterian and Reformed theology—every action is firmly rooted in grace **prior** to the action! That means God always acts prior to what we do. **Grace always reigns over judgment** when we think about God and—when we are open to God's grace—act with our neighbors. Our grace toward others is always experienced by our responding acts to God's grace.

Does that mean preachers have to pound in grace unapologetically? We do what we have to do.

However, hopefully a working definition of grace goes home with each listener—if not that day, then, hopefully, might sink in later in the week. I don't think that we can say it often enough: **grace is God's love**: unmerited, unconditional, and unearned. I'm no more inherently worthy of it than anyone else. **God just loves us**. We didn't do anything to make God love us; We can't do a thing to make God love us less. That's grace. That's God!

And **gratitude** wells up within us. God welcomes us!

That's why we love. That's why we serve. **God first loved us**. When we fully understand God's love overflowing for us; then, we understand our gratitude fully overflowing for God and others!

There's a children's book – and I always believe the best children's books also speak to adults—called: "Because of You..." As the title suggests, it has a simple premise—**each one of us can make a difference**. We can be **kind** and we can **care** for one another. When someone falls, we can help. When two of us do these things together, it means we're friends. When lots of people do these things together, it is called peace. The book ends,

"Even something as big and important as peace begins with something small and precious—it might begin because of you." (B.G. Hennessy, *Because of You*, Candlewyck Press)

Everything we do—absolutely everything—is because **God first loved us**. Unconditionally, not because of merit or earning, just because that is who God is.

Because of that—things can happen **because** of you.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Peter



We need your help live-streaming Sunday morning worship! We only have a few volunteers who facilitate the livestream every week, and we need more! We will be happy to train! It is not difficult. Please contact Gary Moll at 215-264-0221 or e-mail garylmoll@yahoo.com

Transitional Ministry Team Focuses on Mission Study

Carmel's **Transitional Ministry Team** gathered mid-September to begin the fall work of discernment and next steps from the notes of our Spring Study Discussions on the **Seven Marks of Vital Congregations** as well as a number of other inputs into drafting the Mission Study. They have also approved the use of the U.S. Congregational Vitality Survey to be completed by Carmel mid-October with folks completing the Survey as part of a shortened worship service on Sunday, October 17th, immediately following worship.

In addition to the U.S. Congregational Vitality Survey, the Transitional Ministry Team will meet with a consultant from Partners for Sacred Places, a Philadelphia based group that assists congregations in revitalizing sacred spaces and maximizing impact for ministry. We hope to learn more about community engagement services Carmel might move into in our next chapter of ministry. After the completion of the Carmel Mission Study by the Transitional Ministry Team, Session and the Commission On Ministry (COM) of the presbytery will both approve the study and the COM will authorize the congregation to elect the Pastor Nominating Committee (PNC). More on the PNC in next month Courier!

The members of the Transitional Ministry Team working with Pastor Peter include:

- Deb Gates (gatesdl@comcast.net)
- Jay Raulinaitis (jay.raulinaitis@gmail.com)
- Lynne Schutt (lynne45@comcast.net)
- Ken Schuyler (k.schuyler@att.net)
- Jedediah Smith (jedediahsmith77@yahoo.com)
- Mary Ellen Thomas (dickmaire@gmail.com)

We thank them for their service.

—Pastor Peter



The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it, the world and all who live in it ...

Psalms 24:1, NIV

Stewardship

Take Care of God's World by Being Lovingly Careful

For a few weeks last month, we were asked to restrict our use of water to only what was necessary - no watering of lawns and outdoor plants. My air conditioning system also removes moisture from the air to help make it more comfortable in the house. A tube then empties the excess water into my laundry tubs. Do you have an idea about how much water goes down the drain? I was curious so I placed a bucket under that tube to see how much there was. After half a day, there were three gallons in that bucket! Imagine how much water we could save if we took that water to water our plants and bushes! Using ice cubes that fall on the floor in house plants instead of throwing them in the sink is another way to take care of God's world carefully.

We dedicate the Peace and Global Missions collection on October 3. Envelopes are in the pews. The annual pledge campaign will begin shortly. Please consider carefully what you will give to God and his work in 2022. More about this will come in November. — Anne Newman, Stewardship

Nominating Committee is Looking for a Few Good Leaders!



We're looking for leaders! The Carmel **Nominating Committee** is looking for the Class of 2022 elders, deacons and shepherds leaders who:

- Are members of Carmel Presbyterian Church;
- Initiate involvement in the life of the church;
- Care deeply about the future of CPC and its ministries;
- Are committed to CPC in worship, service, learning, and fellowship;
- Work well with others with a positive spirit of learning and cooperation;
- Are open-minded, fair handed, reasonable, and well-balanced;
- Are willing to contribute to the work of the boards of the church;
- Take seriously their responsibilities to God, to the church, to others;
- Care about the needs of the world around us; and,
- Care for people who are struggling with the difficulties of life.

Does this describe you or someone you know? Fill out a form in the Sunday bulletin or request one from the Church Office. Remember, you may nominate yourself! Elders are the governing leaders of the congregation. Deacons focus on service, welcome and caring. Shepherds enjoy enhancing the outreach, preparing communion and distributing flowers from worship. Please send your recommendations to the Nominating Committee, c/o the Church Office.



www.presbycarmel.org





Session Notes

The following items were among the activities, reports and business conducted over the month and during the Regular Meeting of the Session in September.

Modifications to Carmel's Covid guidelines were approved by Session and a letter providing the guideline revisions was mailed to the congregation.

With the leadership of Pastor Peter, a Transitional Team has been formed to take Carmel to the next step in our Transitional Ministry. The Team consists of Ken Schuyler, Deb Gates, Lynne Schutt, Jay Raulinaitis, Jed Smith and Mary Ellen Thomas. In the coming months the Congregation will be hearing more about the next steps in the process.

Rally Day, the "Back to School" blessing of the bags and the resumption of Sunday mornings for Children in September kicked off the new season for Christian Education. In addition, Christian Education has been busy with weekly adult educational programs and planning our Youth Ministry.

A Confirmation Class will begin in October with approximately five members. Session approved a Confirmation Class trip to Camp Johnsonburg in Blairstown, New Jersey on October 23, 2021.

Congregational Life will hold a Harvest Festival on October 31 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. providing a simple lunch "to go" or enjoy together in the church parking lot. This will also include a mission request to donate non-perishables for Interfaith Food Cupboard.

The Outreach Committee was notified by The Presbytery of Philadelphia that the John Gloucester House, a mission Carmel has supported for years, is no longer in operation and no longer accepting donations.

Session was advised that Mary Ann Welsh, Carmel's Business Administrator, is retiring on December 31, 2021.

With Session's approval the Property Committee had Paul Scullin replace all of the gutters on the second floor of the manse at a cost of \$9,645.

The Stewardship Committee has been busy going through the responses to the Members Information Update mailing and were pleased to report that Carmel received many updates to contact information. Also as a result of the mailing response Session approved, in accordance with the Book of Order, to remove 18 members, at their request, from the church membership roll.

—Nancy Pinkowicz, Clerk of Session



Shepherds

It's not too late! Please consider signing up and accepting a nomination to be a shepherd. You may also call the church and tell Mary Kate you are interested for next year, and she will tell the nominating committee. Right now we all need help and understanding. Support our church by accepting nomination to be officers. Please come back to worship with us. Remember this is our church. God loves you, and so do we! — Beth Cherry & Melissa Keller



Warm greeting from your Deacons! We hope everyone is well, and has given themselves some time for peace and calm while adjusting to all of the changes that the end of the summer brings. What exciting times though, as we welcome children back into the preschool and see the telltale signs of fall creeping into the trees!

Speaking of excitement, are you interested in helping out your church community? Are you free once a month for a super-cool meeting with amazing people? THEN YOU SHOULD BECOME A DEACON TODAY! We love new faces and fresh ideas! Even if you just have questions, please touch base with one of us. The more the merrier!

Please reach out to us if there are any projects or causes for which you would like assistance from the Deacons, we are here to help!

Ongoing projects:

Ashley and Karen Bogle continue to make visitations to provide communion to those who can't make it to church.

If you are contemplating any spring cleaning, we ask that you remember the **interfaith food cupboard** (located just inside the lobby). Please check for the current most needed items on the interfaith food cupboard website at: <https://www.i-fha.org/what-we-do/food-cupboard/>

If you could use a home cooked meal, don't forget **Meals in a Moment**! Carmel members, please reach out to Carol Moll (clmoll@yahoo.com) to request a meal.

As always, if you are in need of Deacon support or are interested in becoming a deacon (we are fun!), please reach out to me ampmp611@gmail.com or Pastor Ashley at pastorash80@gmail.com
God Bless! — Abigail Clayton



From the Director of Music



Rejoice in the Lord always!

Carmel's church choirs are open to all Carmel members and non-members. Your friends are welcome to join too.

The Children's Choir, for Grades K-2, rehearses every Wednesday from 5:00 PM to 5:40 PM.

The Junior Choir, for Grades 3-8, rehearses every Wednesday from 5:45 PM to 6:30 PM.

The Youth Choir, for Grades 9-12, rehearses every Sunday from 11:15 AM to 11:45 AM.

The Sanctuary Choir, for Grades 7 - adult rehearses every Thursday evening from 7:30 PM to 9:00 PM.

The Carmel Handbell Choir, for Grades 6- adult rehearses every Monday evening from 7:30 PM to 8:30 PM.

You are welcome to join in the choir at any time throughout the year. For questions please contact Abby Palmisano, Director of Music and Organist. Office phone number is 215-887-1074, Press 3.

All rehearsals are held in large spaces. We follow CDC and state and local guidelines. See you soon!

—Abby Palmisano

thank you

We would like to thank you so much for the beautiful flowers Margie delivered for our 68th wedding anniversary. Margie is our friend from Roslyn Church. We were so glad to see her! Thanks also for all the cards sent by our Carmel friends. Someday we hope to get back to church—as soon as we are able!

~ Bill and June Garrett

Thank you for the flowers and all the notes, including the letter from Carmel wishing me well with my blood work.

~ Kay Bauer



Nursery School News

September got off to a great start with 50 children enrolled in our program. It is definitely a little different than a traditional year with masks and social distancing, but we are so happy to be back here playing, learning and laughing with our little ones. Some of the special things we do have had to be tailored for our new safety guidelines, but we hope to continue to have as much fun as we always had!

We will be setting up our own little pumpkin patch for the children to “pick” their own pumpkins. We are still working on possibly having the visiting farm at the same time.

Picture days are here again. The students will smile pretty for the photographers from Life Touch to make some awesome portraits that their families may purchase.

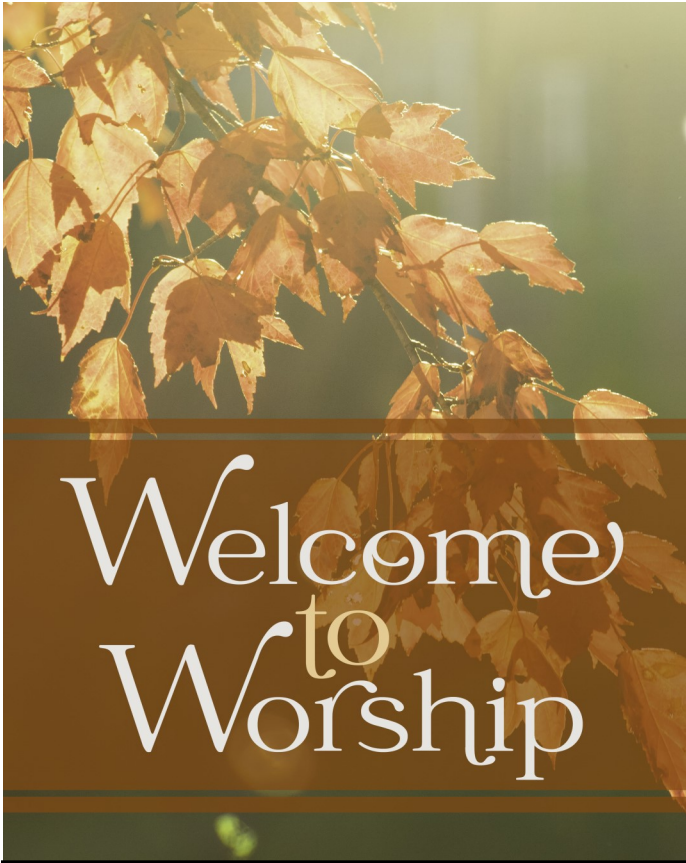
Edge Hill Fire Company will be visiting our children and teaching them the importance of fire safety. We will see the firemen in their fire gear and learn not to be afraid. Then we get to go on the fire-truck!

This year we will again be selling delicious treats from Claire's Gourmet, so if you need a dessert for Thanksgiving, take a look at one of the flyers! You can find one in the church office. the sale starts October 4th and ends October 25th. The orders will be delivered here on November 17th.

For the past few years the children have been showing off their Halloween costumes at a parade around the outside of the church and we can continue that as it is outside. You are welcome to stop by to see the incredible outfits at 11:15 the morning of October 29th.

—Leslie Arrowsmith, Director





Lectionary

October 3rd - World Communion Sunday

Genesis 2:18-24
Psalm 8
Hebrews 1:1-4; 2:5-12
Mark 10:2-16

October 10th

Amos 5:6-7, 10-15
Psalm 90
Hebrews 4:12-16; 2:5-12
Mark 10:17-31

October 17th

Isaiah 53:4-12
Psalm 91
Hebrews 5:1-10; 2:5-12
Mark 10:35-45

October 24th

Jeremiah 31:7-9
Psalm 126
Hebrews 7:23-28
Mark 10:46-52

October 31st - Reformation Sunday

Deuteronomy 6:1-9
Psalm 119
Hebrews 9:11-14
Mark 12:28-34



Please continue to keep **Jean Badger, Joyce Young, and David Campbell, Sr.** in your prayers for healing.

Grace—What a Gift!

Grace strikes us when we are in great pain and restlessness. It strikes us when we walk through the dark valley of a meaningless and empty life. It strikes us when our disgust for our own being, our indifference, our weakness, our hostility, and our lack of direction and composure have become intolerable to us. It

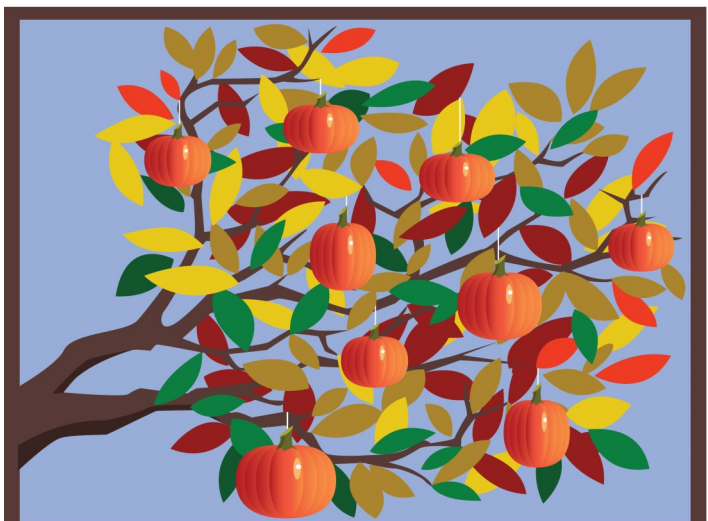
Grace

strikes us when, year after year, the longed-for perfection of life does not appear, when the old compulsions reign within us as they have for decades, when despair destroys all joy and courage.

Sometimes at that moment a wave of light breaks into our darkness, and it is as though a voice were saying: “You are accepted.”

—Paul Tillich from *Newsletter newsletter*,

OCTOBER



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

Happy Birthday to...

Mary Lou Frick, who will turn 91 on October 8th
and

Vesta Carrick, who will turn 94 on October 19th

Happy Anniversary to...

Frank & Betty Bocclair, who will celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary on October 6th

Enjoy your special days!