



# Mount Carmel Message

Mt. Carmel United Methodist Church

1893-2026

*Celebrating 133 years serving the Lord*

January 2026

Volume 18 Issue 8

*The Work of God through Mt. Carmel UMC is done by the efforts of 109+ persons and the Light of Christ through the Holy Spirit. Join this oneness in Christ.*



## From Your Pastor

### After the Light: Carrying Christmas into 2026

As we move into a new year, I've been reflecting on where our Advent and Christmas journey has led us—and where God is calling us next.

During **Advent**, we spoke honestly about waiting in the dark. Isaiah's words reminded us that light does not erase the darkness so much as *enter it*. Advent taught us that God is already at work, even when answers are incomplete, and hope feels fragile.

On **Christmas Eve**, we celebrated the beautiful moment of Christ's birth—the candles, the quiet, the wonder. But on the **Sunday after Christmas**, we asked a more challenging and faithful question: *What happens after the light?*

Luke tells us the shepherds return to their fields after seeing the child. Same work. Same world. But they return glorifying and praising God. They don't stay at the manger—they carry the light back into ordinary life. And Mary, still unsure of what lay ahead, treasures these things in her heart and keeps going. That, too, is faith.

As we step into **2026**, we do so knowing the world is still loud, complicated, and unfinished. Christmas did not fix everything—but it told us the truth: God comes into life as it is, not as we wish it would be. And discipleship begins not with certainty, but with trust.

My prayer for Mount Carmel UMC this year is simple—that we do not try to recreate Christmas, but that we live it. May we carry Christ's light into our work, our relationships, our questions, and our hope. The candles may be out, but the light has moved.

Thanks be to God!

Pastor Dan

### In our Thoughts and Prayers...

"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28

Family of Bro. Jim West  
Family of Metta Nesmith  
Dollie Flemon

Berkley  
Raye  
Jenna  
Jacob

Ben & Jo Ridenour

Craig & Lisa Lee Bible Ministry

Church members at home

Our Church & Community

Our Country & Leaders & Military



If you have someone you want a prayer card sent to, contact Ms. Pat.

*Epiphany – "To show upon" the season from January 6<sup>th</sup> until Ash Wednesday*

Epiphany celebrates the visit of the Magi to see baby Jesus. In this season, we focus on the mission of the church in reaching others by "showing" Jesus as the Savior of all people. It is a time of focusing on Christian brotherhood and fellowship. Let us use this time wisely.

**Invite someone back to Church!!**

### Happy Retirement!

Mrs. Thelma Kern

may never know how many lives her music touched, but we truly appreciate her for touching ours since 2009!

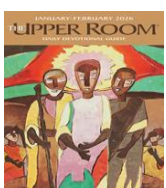


### You Never Know

By Helen L. Marshall

You never know when someone may catch a dream from you. You never know when a little word or something you may do, may open up the windows of a mind that seals a light. The way you love, may not matter at all, but you never know it might.

And just in case it could be that another's life, through you, might possibly change for the better with a broader and brighter view. It seems it might be worth a try at pointing the way to the right. Of course it may not matter at all, but then again...it might.



Pick up your new Upper Room for Jan./Feb. in the Church foyer! Start a habit of reading a meaningful devotion every day in 2026! We always have extra copies so you can take one to a friend!

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Thought for the Month...

I said to the man at the gate of the year, “Give me a light that I may go forth into the unknown.” And the man replied, “Put your hand into the hand of God. That shall be to you better than a light, safer than a known way.” King George



“I know the plans I have for you”, declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11



Did you know??

The lighted cross in the front of the sanctuary was made by Paul and Shad Pickle in 1993 for our 100-year anniversary.



Happy Birthday to...

- 1<sup>st</sup> Susan Mote Ferrell
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Joann Saarnio
- 4<sup>th</sup> Logan Simpson
- 7<sup>th</sup> Doris Clark
- 25<sup>th</sup> Lisa Trevathan

If you would like a complete list of birthdays with addresses, contact Pat V.



As you count your Birthday Blessings this year, consider an offering to our “Birthday Blessing Jar”. We will begin

a new in January and use this to support the Enduring Words Bible Ministry.

Happy Anniversary to...

- 13<sup>th</sup> Sammy & Norma Bibb
- 27<sup>th</sup> Gary & Pat Vanderbilt

Blessing Box Items Needed:

Some ideas -- bottled water  
peanut butter crackers  
snack crackers,  
instant oatmeal, granola bars  
beef jerky, canned meat  
apples / oranges / bananas



“Poppy”

In Memory of Bro. Jim West ~ written by his granddaughter Sarrah

My Poppy was the greatest man I have ever known.

My very first words to him were, “My Poppy is a pest.” – and those words held true right up until the very end. He loved to tease, to poke, to laugh, and to stir things up just enough to make life more fun. As a kid, he always seemed larger than life to me. He wasn’t just my grandfather – he was Poppy, a name I chose because “grandpa” just didn’t fit the giant presence he was in my world.

Some of my favorite memories are of watching him preach. Seeing him in the pulpit was like watching pure purpose. I used to think I was incredibly sneaky, writing him secret notes and slipping them into the offering plate. He always knew, of course – but he let me believe I’d pulled one over on him.

People often came to him with questions about right and wrong, expecting a definitive answer from “the preacher”. His reply was always the same: “Judgement is above my paygrade – that’s between you and God.” That was who he was. Not harsh. Not condemning. Just endlessly loving, accepting and full of grace. He lived his faith in the most real way possible – through kindness.

Some would say he was stubborn – and they’d be right. But his stubbornness taught me something priceless: to stand for what I believe in and never waver. He showed me that conviction and compassion can live in the same heart.

He also loved sports – not just the games, but the people playing them. His greatest joy was watching his kids, grandkids, and great-grandkids complete. I remember him dragging that camper – and Mawmaw – all over the United States to watch Lexie and me play volleyball. He had the loudest booming Southern preacher voice, and I always knew the game was getting intense when I could hear him carrying through the entire gym.

He never missed a chance to tell me he was proud of me. Every doctor he met had to hear about his granddaughter the vet – and how I could probably do their job better than they could. I’m sure they hated that, but I loved it. He was my biggest fan.

He loved Zach so much and never failed to remind me to take care of him. And my kids adored going to see him – joking with him, sneaking his snacks, and stealing the TV remote like it was a competitive sport. Those simple, ordinary moments are treasures now.

He was my Poppy – larger than life, loving, stubborn, funny and endlessly proud of his family. The world feels smaller without him in it, but I know his influence lives on in every life he touched.

I will miss him every day. And I will always be grateful that I got to call him mine.

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If you would like to give “In Memory of Bro. Jim”, please consider these organizations that were dear to Bro. Jim’s heart:

- Ag for Autism, Jonesboro <https://agforautism.org>
- Ronald McDonald House St. Louis <https://rmhcnstl.org>
- Spina bifida <https://www.spinabifidaassociation.org>

Ingathering 2026

“From the fullness of his grace,  
we have all received one blessing  
after another.” John 1:16

January Mission Project:

“Personal Care Items for  
Helping Neighbors”

Worship Opportunities at Mt. Carmel UMC

If you are unable to join us in person, you can worship with us live on our “Mount Carmel Methodist” Facebook page.

Sunday, January 4 “Communion Sunday”

- 9:30 am – Morning Worship
- 10:30 am – Sunday School

Sunday, January 11

- 9:30 am – Morning Worship
- 10:30 am – Sunday School

Sunday, January 18

- 8:30 am – Board Meeting
- 9:30 am – Morning Worship
- 10:30 am – Sunday School

Sunday, January 25 “Quarters for Heifer”

- 9:30 am – Morning Worship
- 10:30 am – Sunday School



For additions to the February Newsletter, send info to [mtcarmelmethodist1893@gmail.com](mailto:mtcarmelmethodist1893@gmail.com) by January 25

Dear Lord, Make Mt. Carmel a light for the world. A Church built on a hill that cannot be hidden. Let our light shine before others, that they may see our good deeds and glorify You, our Father in Heaven. Amen