

CARRILEA'S CORNER

Dear Grace Family,

I've spent the last two days at a peer learning retreat with a group of nonprofits working across Western North Carolina. We're all funded by Dogwood Health Trust (the trust that was established when Mission Hospital was sold and turned into a for-profit hospital—but that's another story).

These organizations are doing powerful work across four core areas: Health & Wellness, Education, Economic Development, and Housing. I was there representing our work with the North Carolina Council of Churches—and I was the only person in the room working at a faith-based institution. And yet, what became overwhelmingly clear is that the narrative we are all working against—across sectors and communities—is the same: White Christian Nationalism. At lunch, I sat with people who told me about the harm they've experienced in churches. Many have walked away—not from their values, but from institutions that claimed to represent Christ while aligning with exclusion, control, and political domination.

They know resistance exists. But what they don't see is that resistance coming from within faith communities.

I think there are a few reasons for that. One, many people of faith no longer feel like we have power. And two, we've often abdicated our power—either because we've seen the ways religion can be weaponized, or because we're afraid of being “too controversial.”

But one of the most powerful definitions we discussed this week stuck with me:
Power is the ability of people to act together to shape the conditions of their lives and communities.

That's not domination. That's not coercion.

That's organizing.

That's discipleship.

That's what Jesus did.

So here's the question I'm sitting with—and maybe you are too:

Who gets to shape the narrative of what it means to be Christian?

Because if we don't—if people of faith don't show up with courage and clarity—then that power will continue to be claimed by those who distort the gospel for personal and political gain.

I believe Grace has a part to play in telling a better story here in Iredell Country.

A truer story.

A liberating story.

Let's keep showing up.

Let's keep shaping something holy.

Carrilea

September 7-13, 2025

September Birthdays

- 4 - Katelyn Hayes
- 4 - May and Davis Kenney
- 4 - Leigh Brown
- 5 - Josh Hayes
- 10 - Billy Adams
- 13 - John Gerard Chesnut
- 16 - Jen DeLong
- 18 - Sydney Koppelmeyer
- 23 - Ian McMillan
- 26 - Andora Nicholson

Anniversaries

- 4 - Jen and Gina DeLong
- 19 - Forrest and Layne Adams
- 20 - David and Janice Comer
- 20 - Neal and Louise Grose
- 21 - Stephen and Emma Chesnut
- 24 - Terry and Diane Hamby
- 30 - Josh and Katelyn Hayes

**We are doing beer and hymns again
At Red Buffalo on Thursday,
September 11. 7PM**

Please join us for the Fall Lunch & Plant! on Sunday, October 5th, immediately after church. A light lunch will be provided, and afterwards we will break up into teams to take on plantings in five various locations around our campus! We have over 60 plants to put into the ground, beginning to create some healthy plant communities around our new trees, a small border to help hold leaves in place, increasing the native plant presence on the berm, installing some understory plant communities at the maples, and finishing planting out several trees. So exciting!!! We will have a number of tools available, but if you have a shovel or trowel, please bring it, as well as your water bottle and work gloves. As in the spring, we will have a children's tent with a fun activity and play. We hope to see you there!
Love, The Grounds Committee.

**ICM NEEDS CANNED CORN AND
GREEN BEANS**

BUDGET

Needed year to date: \$71,712.00

Received year to date: \$65,781.41

UNDER budget: \$5,930.59

Weekly needs: \$1,992.00

This Week's Offering: \$1,666.57



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