

CARRILEA'S CORNER

Dear Grace,

As you hopefully know by now, our theme for Lent is **Cultivating and Letting Go**. I've been spending a lot of time reflecting on what I'm wanting to cultivate in this season—and what I need to release.

I've been holding those questions in conversation with the scriptures I'll be preaching on in the coming weeks. I've also been re-reading *The Gifts of Imperfection* by Brené Brown. In the book, she pairs things to cultivate with things to let go of as guideposts for living a wholehearted life.

This week I've been reading the first chapter: **Cultivating Authenticity and Letting Go of What People Think**.

She begins the chapter with this quote:

"Often people attempt to live their lives backwards: they try to have more things, or more money, in order to do more of what they want so that they will be happier. The way it actually works is the reverse. You must first be who you really are, then do what you really need to do, in order to have what you want." — Margaret Young

In so many ways, preaching at Grace has allowed me to be more authentic than I've ever felt free to be in a church. For that, I'm deeply grateful. And I'm also aware that authenticity isn't something you "arrive" at—it's something you practice. It requires courage. It requires trust. It requires letting go of the constant pull to manage perception.

As a parent, this has become even more real for me. I'm increasingly convinced that what we are teaching our children isn't primarily what we say—but how comfortably we live in our own skin. Whether we apologize for who we are, or inhabit our lives with grounded honesty. Whether we perform, or whether we practice presence.

Lent invites us into that kind of reflection.

What am I performing?

What am I protecting?

What might I need to release in order to live more honestly before God and others?

You may already have clarity about what you want to cultivate this season. But if you'd like some companionship in that process, I invite you to join me in reading *The Gifts of Imperfection*. We'll gather later in March for conversation and reflection together.

With gratitude for a community that makes room for authenticity,
Carrilea

February 22-28, 2026

February Birthdays

- 4 - Grady Lippard, Jr.
- 9 - Janice Comer
- 10 - LeAnda Barnard
- 10 - Lydia Comer
- 14 - Alexander Lee Kudlacek
- 15 - Patti West
- 15 - Steve Hughes
- 18 - Vincent Toups
- 18 - Linda Marshall
- 19 - Landon Hayes
- 19 - Jo Salisbury
- 19 - Autumn Tilley
- 29 - Hollace Scanlan

Anniversary

- 14 - Mike and Gay Shaver

The Mission Board will be "Cultivating Young Minds" by collecting books and money for Speak Life and Live's summer reading camp. The camp is completely free to the kids who participate, and books are available for them to take home and keep. We are asking for donations of money (the cost for the camp is \$150/child), and new or gently used books, beginning reader through young adult levels. Thank you for your generous support of our special offerings!

IREDELL ADULT DAY CENTERS NEEDS BINGO PRIZES AND COFFEE MUGS. IF YOU WANT TO CLEAN OUT YOUR CABINETS, OR HAVE GIFTS OR WHITE

ELEPHANTS YOU WANT TO REHOME, BRING THEM TO CHURCH SUNDAY AND PUT THEM ON THE BACK BENCH. THE BINGO PRESENTS DON'T HAVE TO BE COSTLY - THEY OFTEN BUY SOME OF THEM AT THE DOLLAR TREE. CONTACT SHERI COARSEY (704-880-0827) IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS.

ICM NEEDS CEREAL, RAMEN NOODLES, AND MAC-N-CHEESE.

BUDGET

Needed year to date: \$16,944.00

Received year to date: \$15,946.11

UNDER budget: \$997.89

Weekly needs: \$2118.00

This Week's Offering: \$2634.38



Use this PayPal QR code for easy donations.