



# THE MISSION BELL

CARMICHAEL PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

December 2025/January 2026

Volume LXV Number 11

## Christmas Gift Ministry: Spreading Joy This Season

by Lillian Janik

We are excited to announce the return of the Christmas Gift Ministry, a cherished tradition that embodies the true



spirit of Christmas by giving us the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of local families. The holiday season is a time of warmth, love,

and sharing, and there's no better way to celebrate than by giving back to those in need.

To ensure that every family we support can enjoy a  
*(Continued on page 3)*

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## Christmas Eve at CPC

### FAMILY CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

**5:00 p.m.**

Children help fill the Bethlehem village with nativity characters while we hear the Christmas story through carols, Scripture, and music from the Sanctuary Choir. All children receive a special gift!

### CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE

**11:00 p.m.**

Celebrate Christmas with the Lord's Supper, reading the Christmas Story, and special music from Hannah Ludwig, mezzo-soprano and Zorana Randjelovic-Flores, piano.

All services will be livestreamed at

<https://www.youtube.com/@carmichaelpres>



## From Pastor Keith

# The Need Is Great

In the past several weeks, we have witnessed record breaking numbers of families asking for groceries from our Food Closet, leading to an increased need for volunteers, donations, and financial gifts to sustain this ministry. The need is great! People who have never before visited a food bank or food closet or food pantry have been forced to seek out available resources in order to feed their families. These folks are your next-door neighbors, your friends, your church family. Thank you to all who have responded so quickly to this enormous need.

Even though the government shutdown has ended, it will take time to get financial resources back into the hands of those who were working without pay or not paid the full amount they were entitled to. Pray for these families as they, along with all of us, navigate these difficult economic times. Pray for our political leadership in the nation's capital; pray for discerning wisdom, that they might agree on legislation that benefits all Americans, so we don't find ourselves in the same place

come January 2026. Thank you for your faithful prayers.

The political turmoil and challenging economy have impacted all of us in some way, and yet, you, the members and friends of CPC, have stepped up and contributed

*“As we come to the season of Advent and Christmas, we are reminded that God’s love was manifest in the life of Jesus Christ, born into a world in political and economic turmoil.”*

your time, talents, and treasures to the Food Closet and to CPC’s annual budget where **mission meets ministries** in sharing the good news of God’s love. As we come to the season of Advent and Christmas, we are reminded that God’s love was manifest in the life of Jesus Christ, born into a world in political and economic turmoil. This precious gift of love was and is to be shared with the whole world that God loves so very much. We bear witness to this gift

that we follow, that we sing our praises to, and beckon to come. O come, Emmanuel, to this place where the Word became flesh—**Incarnation**—and dwelt among us.

Frederick Buechner says this about “incarnation.”

“It is not tame. It is not touching. It is not beautiful. It is uninhabitable terror. It is unthinkable darkness riven with unbearable light. Agonized laboring led to it, vast upheavals of intergalactic space, time split apart, a wrenching and tearing of the very sinews of reality itself. You can only cover your eyes and shudder before it, before this: ‘God of God, Light of light, very God of very God... who for us and for our salvation,’ as the Nicene Creed puts it, ‘came down from heaven.’<sup>1</sup> **And dwelt among us!** This is the good news of Advent and Christmas. **Amen & Amen!**

May you, may we, be blessed as together we navigate this Advent and Christmas journey together. Christmas and New Year’s blessings to all,

*Pastor Keith*

<sup>1</sup>*Whistling In The Dark*, by Frederick Buechner



CPC Presbyterian Women present

## Madrigal Concert

Friday, December 12 at 12:00 noon

Please join us in the Sanctuary for a

**FREE Concert**

of seasonal music from the marvelous

### El Camino High School Choir

under the direction of Tessa Kelly

*All are welcome! Bring your Friends!*

## ...Christmas Gift Ministry ...

*(Continued from page 1)*

warm and joyous Christmas, we will be providing WinCo gift cards for food, and a general Visa gift card for whatever the family needs most. These gift cards give the gift of choice, a simple yet powerful way to show that we care and that they are not alone during this festive time of year. The families we have served in the past have shared with us how much they appreciate this ministry and the impact it has had on their family.

The success of the Christmas Gift Ministry depends on the generosity of our church members and the wider community. To make this year's ministry a reality, we need your help. The gift cards we provide are only possible through the donations we receive, and every contribution

counts. Your donation, no matter the size, will make a significant difference in the lives of these families.

### How to Donate

Donating to the Christmas Gift Ministry is simple and can be done in various ways:

1. **In-Person:** You can drop off your donations in the collection box at the church during the 10AM Sunday service, designating it for the Christmas Gift Ministry. You can also stop by our table in the DeVries Gathering Place on Sundays to purchase a Christmas ornament made by the CPC youth as your donation to the ministry!
2. **Online:** For your convenience, we have set up an online donation platform on our church website,

where you can securely contribute.

3. **Mail:** You can mail your donations to our church office. Please make checks payable to Carmichael Presbyterian Church and note "Christmas Gift Ministry" in the memo line.

Let's come together as a church community and make this year's Christmas Gift Ministry a resounding success! The act of giving is a true reflection of the Christmas spirit, and your donations will bring smiles, warmth, and hope to the hearts of those in need. Thank you for your generosity. Together, we can make a positive and lasting impact on the lives of our neighbors in need.

# New Inclusion Quilt Dedicated

by Kathy Lewis, Inclusion Task Force

On Sunday, November 2, CPC dedicated the new Inclusion Quilt that now hangs on the west wall of the sanctuary. This quilt was the result of work by the CPC Inclusion Task Force (TF).

The Inclusion TF was established by session and began work in 2023. We were formed to help our church make changes to be more welcoming and affirming of LGBTQIA+ individuals and to establish a relationship with the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, an organization that supports PC(USA) churches by educating and equipping them to be welcoming and fully affirming congregations. The Inclusion Task Force's responsibilities also include partnering with other churches and our presbytery to strengthen our mutual work, and sharing information with our session and congregation.

One of the things that our work with the Covenant Network taught us was that even if we have a mission statement like ours that says we welcome all, not everyone understands that it means them!

Our pastors have taken leadership in including a statement every Sunday in our *Par-*

Now, this beautiful quilt becomes another visible sign that CPC is an inclusive church.



*A beautiful rainbow-colored quilt created by Maria Brow, now hangs in CPC's Sanctuary as a visible sign that CPC is an inclusive congregation.*

**Maria Brow** took some initial concepts from the Inclusion TF about what the quilt would look like, found patterns to choose from, fabrics to make it work (you should take a close look at the quilt when you have a chance—the fabrics are pretty amazing), and then created the quilt in a remarkably short period of time—all by herself!

Thank you to Maria, the Inclusion TF, our pastors, and all of you in the congregation who join us in sharing God's love by welcoming our LGBTQIA+ visitors and friends, and embracing and affirming our LGBTQIA+ members and families at CPC.

*ish Notes* that tells us what ALL means. And we have added rainbow signage in the front and back of our church.

## California International Marathon December 7 Road Closures



The California International Marathon will run on Sunday, December 7, causing some intersections near the church to be closed. The race starts at 7:00 a.m. near Folsom Dam and travels Oak Avenue, Fair Oaks Blvd, and J Street to the Capitol. Intersections will be closed only while the race comes through, but be prepared, if necessary, to leave home early and avoid the racecourse on your way to church. For more information, go to <https://runsra.org/california-international-marathon/course-information/>.

# Stretching Your Food Closet Dollars

by Barbara Farley

Shopping for groceries can sometimes feel challenging, especially when store specials seem designed for larger families. For instance, you may see deals such as four cans for \$5, but only need two, or two boxes at a discounted price when you only want one. These promotions might not always fit your needs, but there is a way to make the most of them while helping others.

## Maximizing Grocery Store Specials

The Food Closet provides an excellent opportunity to save money on your grocery purchases by using these store specials to benefit both yourself and our community. When you encounter a deal that offers more than you need—such as buying extra cans or boxes—consider purchasing the full special and donating the unused items to the Food Closet. Sometimes, the discounts are so significant that it makes sense to buy products you might not

use, like a cereal you do not eat, simply because the price is too good to pass up. The Food Closet gladly accepts these donations.

## What to Donate

The Food Closet is especially seeking donations of nutritious and basic food items. Examples include peanut butter, jam (because who wants a plain peanut butter sandwich?), canned tuna, rice, spaghetti sauce, canned fruits and vegetables, pasta, and cereal. These items help provide balanced meals to those in need.

## How to Donate

You can easily contribute by dropping off donations at the church office on Sunday mornings, bringing them directly to the Food Closet any morning between 8:30 and 11:00 a.m., or coming to the church office Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Your generosity makes a difference and helps stretch your grocery dollars further to support your community.



# Creative Workshop Save the Date



Please save the date - Thursday, January 22, 2026 from 1:00 to 3:00 p.m. in McMillen Hall - for a “Creative Session” with **Tiffany Ramirez** from Artisan Mind for people with dementia and their caregivers.

This is an opportunity for your loved ones to have a creative time of expression within the world of paint, color, imagination, and perception under the guidance of Tiffany Ramirez, who has been working successfully with Alzheimer’s patients for over 10 years.

While your family member is in this workshop, caregivers will be offered a place to relax – nearby but in a separate area.

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact **Kathy Lewin** at [kslewin@sbcglobal.net](mailto:kslewin@sbcglobal.net).

# Mission Meets Ministries 2026 Stewardship Campaign: Living Our Mission Together

by Patty Kepner, Stewardship Committee

For more than a century, CPC has been a community of faith based in God's love and guided by a shared mission. Together, we have built a legacy of generosity, service, and hope—living out our mission statement, which is:

Responding to God's love through Jesus Christ, we:

- Welcome all
- Nurture relationships
- Grow in faith together
- Connect with and serve our community and the world

Over the past several weeks, the Stewardship Committee has highlighted the many ministries that bring this mission to life each day. Whether through worship and music, Christian education, congregational care, the Food Closet, or community outreach, every ministry reflects how *Mission Meets Ministries* at CPC. Through your giving, prayers, and participation, our congregation continues to share the love of God within and beyond our faith community.

As we look ahead to 2026 and beyond, we imagine a future where CPC continues to grow in faith, deepen relationships, and maintain our reach in the community. Your faith-

ful stewardship makes that future possible. Stewardship is more than giving—it is an expression of gratitude and trust, a way of caring for the many gifts God has entrusted to us. Through your generosity, CPC can continue to nurture fellowship, serve others, and sustain the vibrant ministries that define our congregation.

A highlight of this year's campaign was Commitment Sunday on November 16, when we dedicated our pledges with joyful and thankful hearts. Over 85% of our annual budget relies on your annual pledge. These contributions are critical to our commitment to continuing CPC's ministries and mission in the year ahead.

To those who have already submitted a 2026 pledge—thank you for your faithfulness and generosity. If you haven't yet had a chance, it's not too late! You can make your pledge online at [www.carmichaelpres.org/give](http://www.carmichaelpres.org/give), complete a paper pledge card, or contact **Paul Shultz** at 916-486-9081 (ext. 205) or

[paul@carmichaelpres.org](mailto:paul@carmichaelpres.org) for assistance. Every gift strengthens our shared ministry and helps CPC continue to be a community of faith and service.

Heartfelt appreciation goes to the 2026 Stewardship Committee for their creativity, dedication, and teamwork. Special thanks to **Allison Cagley**, Committee Chair, for her

leadership, and to **Laura Janik**, **Scott Young**, and **Patty Kepner** for their thoughtful contributions. We are grateful as well for the guidance of **Pastor Keith**, the financial expertise of **Paul Shultz**, and the invaluable support of **Karen Gray** and **Julie Ueltzen**—all of whom helped bring this campaign to life.

As we move into the new year, let us continue to live as a congregation of hope, love, and faith—committed to being a church where *Mission Meets Ministries*. Together, we respond to God's love, serve both our congregation and neighbors, and envision a future filled with God's grace and purpose.



# What's Up in Children's & Youth Ministry?

by Michael Lombrano, Children's & Youth Ministry Director

## Community Advent Event

On Sunday, December 14, from 3:00-5:00 p.m., CPC is hosting our second Community Advent Event in McMillen Hall. This is an open house event where you can arrive whenever and leave when you want! We will have several stations to help us celebrate the season, including cookie decorating, Christmas karaoke, crafts, a photo booth and more! We would love to see you and your family there. This is also a great event to invite your friends and neighbors to!

## Youth Group Christmas Party

Our Youth Group Christmas Party is on Wednesday, December 17 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. We would love for all of our 6th-12th grade students and their friends to join the fun. This will be our last youth group of 2025. Youth group will resume on Wednesday, January 7, 2026.

If you have any questions, please reach out to **Michael Lombrano** at 916-486-9081 or ([michael@carmichaelpres.org](mailto:michael@carmichaelpres.org)).

# Community Advent Event

Open House Style  
Sun, Dec 14th, 3-5 pm

McMillen Hall

Cost: FREE

Bring a friend or two

We will have:

- Crafts
- Cookies
- Christmas Karaoke  
and more!

## Art Show

# Windows to the Soul—Part 2 of 2

by Lori Keeney, Art Committee

The current art display in the DeVries Gathering Place is “Windows to the Soul—Part 2 of 2” featuring photographs of CPC’s stained glass windows taken by the late **Phil Mishler** and shared with us, along with the history of these windows by **Jimmi Mishler**:

In the late 1950s, CPC members Jimmi and Phil Mishler moved from Texas and joined Carmichael Presbyterian Church.

Over the years, they were involved in many areas, including choir, church school programs, marinership fellowship, and Heritage Committee, chaired numerous CPC committees, and served as Elders, to name a few.

A credentialed public-school teacher, Jimmi served as CPC’s Director of Christian Education and served on the Heritage Committee from its inception in 1988 until she retired in 2019. She currently enjoys playing handbells at her senior residence and remains very active, enjoying life.

A graduate of Sacramento State College (now CSUS),

Phil was one of the first computer programmers for the state of California. He remained involved in information technology



Photographs of CPC’s stained glass windows by **Phil Mishler**: Nativity (top) and St. John (right) with historical information from **Jimmi Mishler** are on display in the DeVries Gathering Place through mid-January.

throughout his career.

He also had a lifelong interest in photography. Phil took the photographs on display while preparing for CPC’s 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1998. Phil and Jimmi were such a good team.

The Chapel and Sanctuary windows were designed by Cummings Studios, then lo-

cated in San Francisco. Design ideas are thought to have come from the book *Church Symbolism* by Ralph Addison Cram, 1938. **Nick Tomich**, architect of CPC’s sanctuary, recalled in an interview:

*“We were determined to have glass in it, leaded glass. You couldn’t buy metal frames; metal was out of the question. So, we had wood frames built to hold the leaded glass. It was all done in San Francisco, in a studio. The wood windows were shipped down there and they installed the glass, and then... in the winter time (it must have been December), I borrowed my father’s truck ... drove to San Francisco and brought this load of windows back. I recall it was about four in the afternoon. Ray May (the carpenter) was standing there, he hadn’t gone home yet. I said, ‘Ray, I have the windows for the Chapel.’ He said, ‘Well, I’m not going home. Let’s get going, let’s put ‘em in here, it’s going to rain.’”*

*The next Sunday was the Sunday before Christmas.”*

The chancel stained glass windows were a happenstance discovery. Jimmi was

*(Continued on page 9)*

# The Votes Are In!



Photo: Susan Maxwell Skinner

CPC was awarded “Best House of Worship” at the Best of Carmichael awards gala on November 7. **Scott and Valerie Young** represented CPC and received an award certificate in addition to accolades from county, state, and federal officials.

Thank you to everyone who voted and everyone who helps make Carmichael Presbyterian Church a great place to worship, serve, and grow!

## ... Windows to the Soul ...

*(Continued from page 8)*

looking into the history of our windows for CPC’s 75-year history book and learned that the Cummings Studio moved from California to Massachusetts. Jimmi contacted Bill Cummings, the studio owner, who said he would be happy to search for any historical information. During their conversation, he asked Jimmi if we had ever completed the chancel windows. Jimmi had no idea what he was talking about. Bill looked all over (even in his attic), and found the original drawings! Everyone was so elated and grateful for Jimmi’s detective work.

Then, at Jimmi’s urging, **Pastor Keith DeVries’** friend and stained glass artist, **Geraldine Esminger** brought the

sketches to life, creating new windows using the original sketches for eight windows containing symbols depicting the life of Christ: Annunciation, Nativity, Epiphany, Baptism, Transfiguration, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension. The windows were installed in 2013.

In this art show, you will see Phil’s photographs of the eight chancel windows, along with the apostle windows.

Many thanks to Jimmi Mishler for her hard work over the years preserving the history of our stained glass windows. As we honor and pay gratitude to Phil Mishler for his photographs, we know this was not an easy task. Depending on the season and light of day, the windows had

to be illuminated just right to capture the beauty in a photograph. He loved photography, and we are proud to display such lovely work.

We are also grateful to Art Committee member **Clair Daugherty** who cut and stained custom matting for the photos.

Carmichael Presbyterian Church’s stained glass windows tell an amazing story of faith, love and determination. This art show displays the second part of our beloved windows. Part one was shown in September 2022. Look around on a Sunday church morning and behold this blessing of such beauty; our windows may invoke a silent guide, inviting reflection, and an inner spiritual peace.

# Thank You for Your Gifts and Year End Gifts

## Thank you

Many thanks to those members who have fulfilled their 2025 general fund pledges and those members who have met their 2025 commitment for their Paving the Way pledge. As of mid-November, \$277,835 has been received during 2025 for the Paving the Way campaign. This represents 33% of the total amount of \$841,587 pledged for the Paving the Way campaign.



## Year End Gifts

Any contributions that you would like included on your 2025 giving statement must be brought to the church office by Tuesday, December 30 or post-marked/electronically posted by Wednesday, December 31. If you have not completed your 2025 pledge, or can make an additional gift, please do so by December 31. If you have any questions, please contact **Paul Shultz**, Financial Administrator at [paul@carmichaelpres.org](mailto:paul@carmichaelpres.org) or 916-486-9081.

# Donate Sanctuary Flowers for 2026



You can donate flowers to adorn our Sanctuary during worship on

Sundays! As with so many things, the cost for 2026 is going up a bit: \$65 for one bouquet or \$115 for both bouquets. It's easy to do: go to <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0E4BA4AE29A5FE3-60693685-sanctuary> or scan the QR code to choose an open date at least one week in advance. Fill in the information and submit your payment to CPC with "flowers" in the memo line. Or, call the church office and we'll help you sign up over the phone.

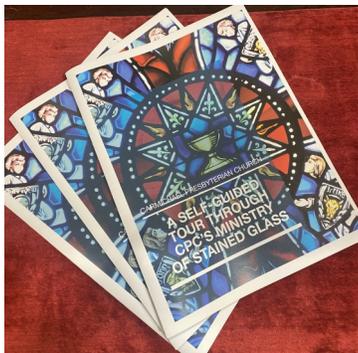


This is a meaningful way to remember a loved one or celebrate a special occasion. You may keep the flowers after worship or have our Deacons deliver them to someone in need of a bit of cheer.

# Take a Tour of CPC's Stained Glass

Do you know the history of CPC's stained glass windows?

Do you know where all of them are? You can find these answers and more in a new booklet, "A Self-Guided Tour Through CPC's



Ministry of Stained Glass," compiled by **Debbie & Brian Nordeen**, with encouragement from **Pastor Keith** and

proofreading by **Pastor Ivan**.

Printed copies of the tour booklet are available in the church office or you can access the booklet online at <https://carmichaelpres.org/history/>. Look for "Where can I learn about CPC's stained glass windows?" to find the link to the booklet.

Enjoy learning more about CPC's ministry of stained glass.



# Donate a Poinsettia

Help decorate our Sanctuary for the Advent season and honor someone special at the same time. Just fill out this form, include cash or a check for \$10.00 per poinsettia payable to Carmichael Presbyterian Church, and return it to the church office by **December 2**.

*Deacons will deliver a few poinsettias to our homebound members and friends each week and replace them with fresh flowers throughout the Advent and Christmas season.*

Please print all names as you would like them to appear in the bulletin (they will be included in the December 7 *Parish Notes*):

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of: \_\_\_\_\_

(or)

In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

**Please submit your order form and payment by December 2**

# Charitable Donation Tax Changes



The new federal tax act signed into law in July 2025 made some important changes to the federal tax provisions for charitable contributions. These tax revisions will take effect for the 2026 tax year. The main changes that effect charitable donations are:

- Effective with the 2026 tax year, those individuals who use the standard deduction may also deduct cash donations to charitable organizations up to \$1,000 for single filers or \$2,000 for married couples filing a joint return. This change is meant to encourage individuals who take the standard deduction to increase their participation in charitable giving.
- Also effective with the 2026 tax year, those individuals who itemize deductions will only be able to take a charitable contribution tax deduction to the extent that their qualified contributions exceed 0.5% of their adjusted gross income (AGI). For example, a married couple with an AGI of \$100,000 who itemize deductions will only be able to claim charitable donations in excess of \$500.

It may be appropriate to review your charitable giving in light of these changes. Also, these changes only apply to the federal tax law and do not apply to state income tax. Each individual's tax situation is different and consulting with a tax or financial consultant may be appropriate.

There are other tax changes created by this tax act, some of which are effective in the 2025 tax year and others which will become effective in the 2026 tax year. You can find information on other tax changes on the internet. Here is one link, <https://www.fidelity.com/learning-center/personal-finance/one-big-beautiful-bill>. There is also a recent article in the November/December issue of the *AARP Bulletin*.

## Session Spotlight

by Mary MacDonald, Clerk of Session

At their regular meeting on October 286, your Session:

- Received the September 2025 financial reports.

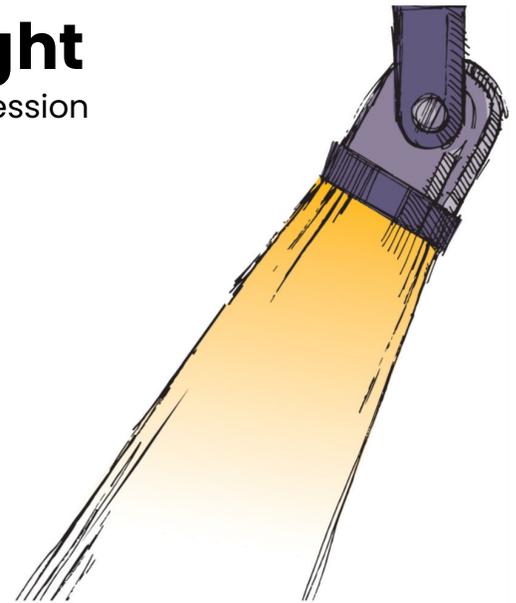
### General Fund

Income, September	\$67,543.88
Income, YTD	\$627,868.19
Expense, September	\$71,495.00
Expense, YTD	\$669,480.50

### 21<sup>st</sup> Century Fund

Income, September	\$33,485.42
Income, YTD	\$284,476.80
Expense, September	\$17,566.34
Expense, YTD	\$228,298.59

- Approved moving the December regular Session meeting to Tuesday, December 16 at 7:00 p.m.
- Appointed **Anita Lawson, Ernie Chard** and **Marsha Cook** as CPC's commissioners to the November 2 Presbytery meeting.



# Library Corner Large Print Books & More

by Doris Beckert

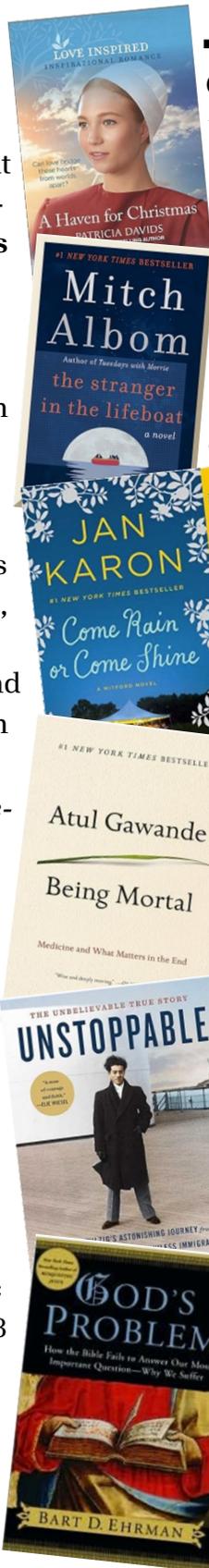
Did you know that your church library has a small collection of large print books? Recent additions include the following, donated by **Doris Beckert**:

- *A Haven for Christmas* by Patricia Davids (Fic Dav large print) Written by a Christian author, this is part of *A North Country Amish Romance* series that takes place in New Covenant, Maine. The characters are an Amish widow and an English cowboy with an addiction.

- *The Stranger in the Lifeboat* by Mitch Albom (Fic Alb large print) Well-known author of *Tuesdays with Morrie* and other, Albom asks what would happen if we cried out to God for help and someone claiming to be God appeared before us.

- *Come Rain or Come Shine* by Jan Karon (Fic Kar large print) Book 13 of 15 in the *Mitford* series tells of Father Tim's adopted son, Dooley's wedding.

Other recent donations are:



- *Being Mortal* by Atul Gawande (362.17 Gaw) was written in 2014 but still holds true for today. It is a discussion of assisted living and nursing homes and what is needed. The author is a doctor, works in public health, and is director of health systems innovation.

Sparking life into what could have been dry scientific prose are case studies of various situations that could arise. Donated by **Marti Wallace**.

- *Unstoppable: Siggie B. Wilzig's Astonishing Journey from Auschwitz Survivor and Penniless Immigrant to Wall Street Legend* by Joshua Greene (920 Wil) is an inspirational story of the rise of an Auschwitz survivor and penniless immigrant to Wall Street success.

- *God's Problem: How the Bible Fails to Answer Our Most Important Question—Why We Suffer* by Bart Ehrman (231.8 Ehr). The subtitle says it all.

# CPC Library Catalog Now Online



All 2,900+ books in the church library collection have been entered into an online database. Here's how you can use it:

1. Go to <https://www.librarything.com/catalog/carmichaelpres>

2. Sort books by title, author, or date OR click on "search this library" in the upper right corner to search CPC's collection.

3. Each book has an icon that looks like the card of a card catalog (on the right next to the green "plus" sign). Click on that to see the book's details, including the Dewey Decimal (DDC), which can then be found in the church library. Please note, the DDC may vary slightly.

4. Come to the church library to check out the book(s) you've found. The church library is open on Sunday mornings and by appointment during church office hours (Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.).

# Presbyterian Women Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ

by Lisa Benadom

In Part I of our Bible Study, we have been exploring find-

ing re-  
silience  
in Jesus  
Christ.  
Now we  
shift to  
Part II -  
Finding  
our Joy.  
Lesson  
Four is  
entitled  
“The  
Prodigal  
Child,  
the Eld-  
est  
Child,

and the Devoted Parent.”

Many of us are familiar with the story of the prodigal son but our author challenges us to look at the story through a different lens. What if the benevolent father was the devoted mother? And, what if the prodigal son was the prodigal daughter? Would women and girls hear this story differently and would it reveal the scriptures to us in a different way? Lesson 5 is equally intriguing. Entitled “The Gift of the Woman Who Was Poor,” the lesson's main idea is that the joy



Presbyterian Women will explore Lesson Four: *The Prodigal Child, the Eld-est Child, and the Devoted Parent* (top) in December and Lesson Five: *The Gift of the Woman Who Was Poor* (right) in January in this year's study, Finding Resilience, Joy and Our Identity in Jesus Christ.

in Christ is more than happiness. For many people, joy and happiness go hand in hand. Christians, however, can experience joy even when things are challenging. The joy



that we find in Christ can change horrible circumstances into faith-filled, even joyous times.

We hope that this summary of what lies ahead will prompt you to consider joining us. How?

**Pastor-led Bible Study:** On the second Thursday of the month at 10:00 a.m., Pastor **Keith DeVries** leads a study discussion via Zoom. Dates: December 11 and January 8. All are welcome! If you wish to join the Zoom meet-

ings, please contact **Karen Gray** in the church office and she will happily provide you with the Zoom link.

**Mary Martha Circle Meeting:** On the third Thursday of the month at 1:00 p.m., our PW Circle meets in the

DeVries Gathering Place. This Circle of women gathers for a time of Bible study, prayer, fellowship, mission and reflection. If you have questions about our circle, please contact **Lisa Benadom** ([lbenadom@com-cast.net](mailto:lbenadom@com-cast.net)) or **Kathy Daigle** ([kathypdaigle777@gmail.com](mailto:kathypdaigle777@gmail.com)).

**PW Bible Study Books:** A few Bible study guides are still available. If you are interested in obtaining one, contact **Terry Sakuda** at [terry.sakuda@yahoo.com](mailto:terry.sakuda@yahoo.com). The cost is \$16. A copy is also available for checkout in our church library.

Our Bible study and our Circle meetings our central to PW. However, we offer other joy-filled opportunities. Dorcas Circle, the World Service

(Continued on page 15)

# Remembering CPC's Centennial Celebration



Two years ago, on Sunday afternoon December 2, 2023, all of CPC's music ensembles past and present (Sanctuary Choir, Mission Bells, Celebration Singers, Living Water, Waterfall Singers, and Praise Team) presented a concert celebrating Carmichael Presbyterian Church's 100th birthday. This festive centennial concert capped a whole year of memorable events and programs, including opening a long-buried time capsule, planting trees, hosting *plein air* painters, publishing an updated history book, sharing our pulpit with guest preachers who grew up in our church family, a gala luncheon, and much more.

## ... PW ...

*(Continued from page 14)*

Sewing Circle, is for those who enjoy cutting, quilting, measuring, sewing, and yarn knotting. The circle meets the first Tuesday of each month from 9:30-11:30 a.m. in the Howard Crowley Room unless otherwise scheduled. Contact **Carolyn McGregor** ([sabrina53@earth-link.net](mailto:sabrina53@earth-link.net)) to learn how you can put your nimble fingers to good use! AND again, on Friday, December 12 at 12:00 noon, PW is sponsoring a FREE concert of seasonal music from the marvelous El Camino High School Madrigal Choir. We encourage you to invite your friends!

Please consider joining us in any or all our programs. We would love to have you join us!

## MISSION BELL DEADLINE



**January 10**

for the **February 2026**  
edition

*(Please note: There will not be a separate January newsletter)*

Submit articles to  
Karen Gray at  
[karen@carmichaelpres.org](mailto:karen@carmichaelpres.org)  
or mail/drop off a hard  
copy in the church office.



## ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

**Sunday, February 1**

immediately following worship

Find out more about what happens at CPC  
on and beyond Sundays.

### Agenda Items Will Include:

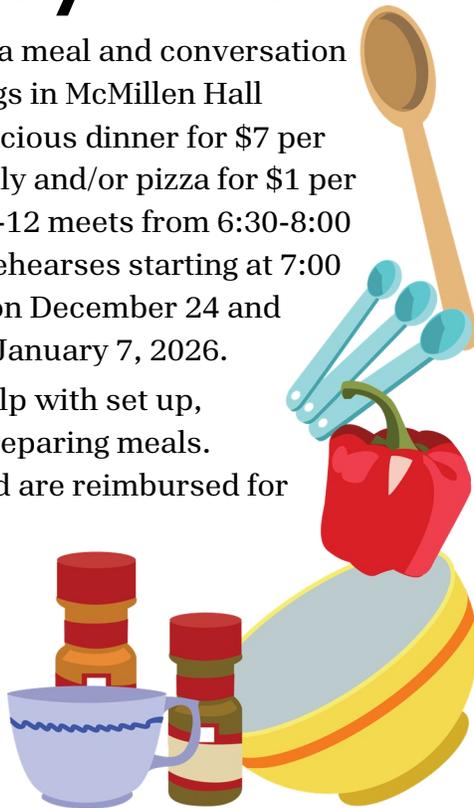
- reviewing the budget for 2026
- electing elders, deacons, and nominating committee members
- receiving the 2025 annual report
- approving Terms of Call for Pastor Keith and Pastor Ivan.

*Watch for details coming soon!*

## Wednesday Dinner

Everyone is invited to enjoy a meal and conversation together on Wednesday evenings in McMillen Hall starting at 6:00p.m. Enjoy a delicious dinner for \$7 per person with a \$25 max per family and/or pizza for \$1 per slice. Youth Group for grades 6-12 meets from 6:30-8:00 p.m. and the Sanctuary Choir rehearses starting at 7:00 p.m. There will not be dinners on December 24 and 31, but dinners will resume on January 7, 2026.

Volunteers are needed to help with set up, clean up, making pizzas, and preparing meals. Cooks can choose the menu and are reimbursed for food expenses. You can help once or twice or every Wednesday. Interested? Contact **Pastor Ivan** at 916-486-9081 or [ivan@carmichael-pres.org](mailto:ivan@carmichael-pres.org) and he'll be glad to help you get plugged in.



## Planning a Meeting or Event?



As a new year begins, the

Carmichael Presbyterian Church campus gets busier and busier. Are you planning a meeting or event in the coming months? Remember to reserve your space early! It's easy!

You can stop by the church office during regular office hours and talk with **Karen Gray** or **Julie Ueltzen**, OR call the church office at 916-486-9081, OR email [karen@carmichaelpres.org](mailto:karen@carmichaelpres.org) or [carmichaelpres@gmail.com](mailto:carmichaelpres@gmail.com).

We'll need to know:

- ◆ the date and time for your meeting (and what time you plan to arrive)
- ◆ a contact name and phone number or email
- ◆ where you would like to meet (if you have a preference)
- ◆ any special set-up or equipment needs

There are some restrictions on outside groups using CPC facilities. Karen or Julie can provide details and additional information as needed.

# Scuttlebutt

## News from CPC's Marinerships

### Companionship

Saturday, November 1, the Companionship met in the DeVries Gathering Place for



*Companionship shared supper and planning for 2026 in November.*

our annual planning meeting for 2026. Some of us arrived early to help **Barbara Farley** set up for CPC's annual Alternative Gift Market in McMillen Hall. Back in the DeVries Gathering Place we had our business meeting and started with a list of ideas provided by seven members who met in October to start brainstorming. After much discussion we completed a fun list of events for 2026. Following the meeting the Farleys provided us with a delicious early supper of chili, fresh vegetables, and bread.

Next up will be Christmas caroling at Eskaton and at the

homes of some of our members. If you'd like to visit our ship, please contact our Look-out **Sharlene St. Clair**.

### Mothership

Mothership gathered for the perfect fall afternoon of pie making and conversation in McMillen Hall. Our talented baking instructors, **Julie Ueltzen** and **Lynette Ledesma**, led the way demonstrating each

and weave our dough into beautiful creations. Some of us came with years of pie-making experience, while others were rolling out dough for the very first time. By the end, everyone picked up a few new baking tips and enjoyed the sweet reward of time spent together. On the menu: a classic cherry pie with lattice crust, a Dutch apple pie with crumble topping, and the surprise favorite of the day was a gluten-free "faux pecan" pie, made with crushed gluten-free pretzels instead of nuts. It was a delicious and creative win for our friends with gluten and nut allergies. Just as the pies were coming out of

the oven, **Pastor Keith** popped in— perfect timing to become our official guest taste tester!



*Mothership members enjoyed a pie-making afternoon (with special guest **Pastor Keith**) plus dinner and show in November.*



step before setting us loose to mix, roll, crimp,

rant to Mesa Mercado at the

*(Continued on page 18)*

## ... Scuttlebutt ...

*(Continued from page 17)*

Milagro Centre, and as always, the food did not disappoint. Some of us enjoyed a beer (some did not... “Thou shalt not judge,” right?). After dinner, we strolled over to the Safe Credit Union Performing Arts Center for “Golden Girls: The Laughs Continue Tour.” This hilarious parody imagined what Miami’s sassiest seniors might be up to today, complete with all their classic one-liners and antics. It was a much-needed night of laughter, connection, and fun!

### Nautilus

The Nautilus crew anchored in the parlor on November 1 for a gathering organized by **Louissette Asmar**. There was an interesting mix of members present. There were seven regulars and seven new members from the scuttled Clipper Ship.

Louissette challenged those present to share a memorable holiday event or tradition. The responses were varied and most interesting. A highlight was **Anita Lawson’s** memories of her parents’ Eastern European heritage and traditions. Anita described how, as a child, she would sing a Slovak Christmas carol. The crew asked to hear it and she sang the beau-

tiful Christmas song for everyone.

Many of the crew shared cakes and candy throughout the meeting.

**Barbara Reimers** finished the meeting by urging everyone to attend the January meeting where plans will be made for the coming year. The crew then boarded the Nautilus and sailed away through the rugged parking lot.

### Skipjacks

In November we took a departure from our former White Elephant Sale. Instead, we bid at our live auction for more upscale donations. Items each member donated had a wide range in size (CD’s to a huge framed art print), in color (white ceramic teapot to vibrant fabric beach bag), and in material (wooden ornaments to glass bottles of wine to enamel earrings). **Carolyn Biggers** was

our mighty auctioneer, able to get higher bids with a stare. The end result of the auction was a hefty \$578, which goes toward next year’s projects.

During all of this activity we snacked on baked goods and spiced apple cider. Pumpkin was the major ingredient, following the seasonal trend. But surprisingly there wasn’t any leftover Halloween candy from the night before.

A business meeting preceded this fun. The devotional about ancestry provided by **Bette Johnson** sparked discussion about All Saints Day, Dia de los Muertos, Roman catacombs, epitaphs (I was like you. You will be like me.). We reviewed our treasury and voted to give \$150 to the Christmas Gift Ministry.

It was decided to keep the office of Skipper and rotate the First Mate’s job among the membership.

Our Christmas lunch is scheduled for December 5 at High Hand in Loomis. The Nominating Committee is working on a slate of officers and will report at the lunch.



*Skipjacks raised funds for their projects with a live auction followed by fall refreshments.*

# Our CPC Staff

**The Rev. Keith L. DeVries**

**The Rev. Ivan N. Herman**

**Keith Atwater**, Music Director

**Michael Lombrano**,  
Children's & Youth Ministry  
Director

**Paul & Mary Camozzi**,  
Childcare Providers

**Karen Gray**,  
Executive Assistant

**Julie Ueltzen**,  
Administrative Assistant

**Paul Shultz**,  
Financial Administrator

**Ron Morris**,  
Maintenance Manager

**Christian Bolen**, Custodian

**John Busath**,  
Food Closet Warehouse  
Manager

**Heidi Van Regenmorter**,  
Organist

**Gabe Bisho**, Pianist

**Will Condrey**, Drummer

**Merlyn Van Regenmorter**,  
Bassist

**Noor Bitar, Michael Gray,**  
**Bruce MacLean,**  
**Steve Parker, Kiyo Romais,**  
and **Avonlee Janik**,  
Audio/Video Technicians

# Our Mission

Responding to God's love through  
Jesus Christ, we:

- Welcome all
- Nurture relationships
- Grow in faith together
- Connect with and serve our community and the world



# Contact Us



## by phone:

916-486-9081

### Extensions:

Keith DeVries	203	Julie Ueltzen	200
Ivan Herman	202	Michael Lombrano	207
Paul Shultz	205	Ron Morris	206
Karen Gray	201	Keith Atwater	208

## via e-mail:

Keith DeVries	keith@carmichaelpres.org
Ivan Herman	ivan@carmichaelpres.org
Michael Lombrano	michael@carmichaelpres.org
Julie Ueltzen	carmichaelpres@gmail.com
Karen Gray	karen@carmichaelpres.org
Paul Shultz	paul@carmichaelpres.org
Ron Morris	ron@carmichaelpres.org
Keith Atwater	music@carmichaelpres.org

**The church office is open Monday-Friday 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.**



**TIME VALUE MAIL**

## Sundays @ CPC

### **In-Person & Live Stream Worship**

**10:00 a.m.**

A blend of traditional and contemporary music styles bring new life to the Word. Worship in the Sanctuary or join online. Go to [youtube.com/@carmichaelpres](https://youtube.com/@carmichaelpres) or search for “carmichaelpres” on the YouTube app or your Smart TV.



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### **Children's Sunday School**

**10:15 a.m.**

All children are welcome and encouraged to attend worship.

Following the Time for Young People, kids age 4-5<sup>th</sup> grade are dismissed to their classes.

Preschool through 2nd grade students experience Bible stories through Godly Play. Kids in 3rd-5th grade learn together using lectionary-based Whirl curriculum.

Nursery care for infants through age 3 is available throughout the morning.



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### **Coffee Fellowship**

### **Waterfall Singers & Youth Bible Study**

**11:00 a.m.**

Visit and enjoy a cup of coffee and a cookie while you browse the art exhibit in the DeVries Gathering Place or chat with friends old and new following worship.

Children in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade can join CPC's children's choir, Waterfall Singers.

Youth in 6<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> grade are encouraged to come to Room 204 for Bible study.

