



# KARMEL NEWS

FEBRUARY 2026

## From the Desk of Pastor Jason

Greetings friends,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the start of a new year. February in Minnesota can seem dreary with the lack of sunlight and the fact that we're in the middle of winter. However, there is more sunlight with each new day, and I'm reminded of Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 4:6 when he says, "For God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."

I think these words are appropriate for us here. Paul was writing to a group of believers undergoing suffering. These words follow Paul's encouragement to the believers not to lose heart as they share the Good News of Jesus. We must remember that as we go about our day and interact with people who aren't believers, we don't boast about ourselves but instead boast in Jesus as Lord. Then, as we proclaim the Gospel, people don't see us; they see Jesus.


Even if we're rejected for the message we bring, we won't lose heart. This world—our neighbors, our friends, our family—needs to see us live with such joy and passion, even in the middle of a cold Minnesota winter. People need to see the church as people full of compassion, love, and truth.

Darkness doesn't like the light; it will flee from it. We must take on the full armor of God, be fully clothed in Jesus, so that when the day of darkness comes, we will stand. We will stand firm in faith, trusting in the guidance of the Holy Spirit to be faithful witnesses of Jesus.

So as we navigate these February days together, let's ask ourselves: How can I be a bearer of Christ's light this week? Who in my life needs to see the hope, joy, and love that Jesus brings? Maybe it's a neighbor, a coworker, or someone at the grocery store. The opportunities are all around us. Let's step into this calling as witnesses not with fear or anxiety, but with confidence that the One who called light out of darkness is the same One who shines in our hearts today. He's with us, he's in us, and he'll give us exactly what we need to be his light in this world.

Peace,  
Pastor Jason

*Our mission:*  
The mission of Karmel Covenant Church is to love God, serve others, and make Jesus followers.  
*Matthew 22:36-40; 28:19-20 2:42-47*



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# Karmel Covenant Church History

## In the Shadow of the Church

When I was asked to write my thoughts of what it was like living next to Karmel Covenant Church, I thought it would be appropriate to begin with a short story of my parents. Both Dad (John) and Mom (Augusta) arrived in America from Sweden in the early 1900's. Although they didn't know each other in Sweden, they met at the 1<sup>st</sup> Covenant Church in Minneapolis. In a few years they would marry and both took jobs near the church in what is now downtown Minneapolis. Within a couple of years, they started a family that would eventually number seven children, me being the youngest. My dad didn't care for city life and in 1929, he was told by a real-estate man about a farm located next to a Swedish Mission Covenant church in rural Isanti County. After seeing the place, he knew that it was a perfect fit for his growing family. All but two of my siblings were born in the house that Phyllis and I currently live in. I was born in Princeton in 1940.



One of my earliest memories of Karmel Covenant was what everyone called the church. It was known as the "Chapel". When I was a young boy, the church did not have electricity but in the mid 1940's we received our first electrical power that was generated from some large Delco batteries. When I was around twelve years of age, Lee Olson's dad, Vernon, organized the digging of the church basement. I recall his Ford tractor scooping the dirt out from under the church. I was sure that the whole church would fall into the hole. In the mid 1950's we finally had an indoor bathroom installed and the trips to the outhouse were soon a distant memory.

As long as I live, I will never forget my dad having the job of making sure the old furnace was fired-up for each of the services or events we had at church during the colder months of the year. I recall on many cold dark winter mornings walking from our house to church with my dad to get the fire started in the old coal furnace. The heat was carried through a pipe from the furnace to the floor grate where folks would stand around warming up before church.

Christmas at Karmel was always a special time of the year. As a boy I always looked forward to Julotta on Christmas day. We kids had to recite our pieces in front of the whole congregation and afterwards we all received a bag filled with ribbon candy, peanuts and an apple. I also remember wearing my new Christmas shirt that I received as a gift the night before on Christmas Eve. This was the most exciting time at church as a young boy.

Living close to the church has in recent years allowed me to host "Simply Christmas" in my barn. This event each year brings hundreds of folks together to sing traditional carols and hear the simple message of Christ's birth. My hope is that this Karmel tradition will continue for many years to come.

Sunday school in my youth was very memorable. Because our church was so small, we had seven classes going on in the sanctuary at the same time. I remember one of my early Sunday school teachers (Mrs. Ed Tonn) giving me a "Big Bogie" chocolate candy bar because I memorized my Bible verse. As I grew older, I loved being part of the Young Peoples group at church. We always met on Saturday night at 8 o'clock. We had singing, testimonies, a short message and then finished the night with some fun games and activities. I remember one summer our Young Peoples group rented five boats on Green Lake and had a hymn sing from out on the water. We would also go into Princeton to do some street outreach with songs and testimonies.

Growing up next to the church I always looked forward to new pastors coming to serve that had kids my age. Many of these kids grew up to become lifelong friends.

I left the Karmel community as an adult and got married to my sweetheart Phyllis but in 1969 with our young son, Steve, we purchased the farm of my youth and have lived here for over fifty years. As I reflect on my life, I am so thankful that my Dad and Mom chose to buy the farm next to the church. I realize that living next to Karmel Covenant has been a gift for me and my family for nearly a century. My son Steve and his family are now the third and fourth generation in this incredible legacy gift.



In conclusion these experiences that I have shared are just a small snapshot of memories that have established a faith foundation for my life that continues to this day. ~ Carl Anderson

## Pastor Kohl

Growing up in faith has been a common ministry theme for me these last few months. And that makes sense—I think any genuine Christian would say that they want to change to become more like Christ. But change is hard, for a lot of reasons.

I think that one such obstacle is the role of suffering and discipline. Before the technological boom of the last 100 years, suffering was ubiquitous to the human experience. Death rates were extraordinarily high, and life expectancy was low. Disease was difficult to manage. Work was hard. Let's face it, life in the modern West is easy compared to that of our predecessors.

Yes, death and suffering still exist; even the greatest technological developments have not solved that fundamental problem. But it has allowed us—at least for a time—to hide from them. So much of life in the West is spent pursuing comfort; the aim is to mitigate suffering and difficulty for as long as we possibly can. Even real conversations about death are taboo, and we have invented all manner of euphemisms for death to obscure the conversation further. This is especially true for young people, for whom there is near statistical certainty that they will live several decades more. Death is so far off it doesn't seem real.

We live for comfort, and we run from hardship. We are allergic to suffering. And that's a problem, for two reasons. First, suffering and death are still real. It comes for all of us eventually. Only now, we are ill-equipped to deal with them. And second, it colors the way we see God and the role that suffering plays in our lives as Christians. True, God desires our ultimate happiness and joy in a sin-and-suffering-free new creation. But God has other goals for us, as well, and some of them are more important than our comfort. He wants us to become holy, mature, and complete.

Take a look at James 1:2-4

*Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

The Bible is replete with examples and instructions of how God redeems suffering to change us. This is not to say that suffering is inherently good, that we should enjoy suffering, or that we should pretend that it does not hurt (grief is also a part of the Christian life). However, we as Christians are called to a certain *posture* when it comes to "trials of various kinds." We do not try to run or hide from them. Instead, we confront them in hope and joy because we believe that God will do something good in us and through us with that suffering.

Change is hard. It is hard because it almost always involves some form of trial. There is pain, loss, and even suffering in meaningful change. For those without the hope of the gospel, all of life is a form of metaphorical "palliative care"—stay comfortable until the end comes.

Friends, God wants something better for you. The Christian life is costly, but it is meaningful. Don't spend your whole life on the run; confront the trials of this life with hope and joy in the God who redeems all suffering. And little by little, you will find that you are increasingly becoming more like Christ.

As the apostle Paul (who suffered a great deal himself) once said:

*Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal (2 Corinthians 4:16-18).*

## Faith Community Nurse

First, a big thank you to everyone who donated blood, many for the first time, at our American Red Cross blood drive on January 8th. Collectively, 21 pints of blood were donated, just short of our goal of 25, giving us a successful, life-saving drive. Look forward to another drive coming in a few months.

February is known as American Heart Month, created to bring attention to heart health and cardiovascular diseases. According to the American Heart Association, heart disease claims a life every 34 seconds. Heart disease is a broad term for many conditions that affect the heart, blood vessels, and heart valves and can include coronary artery disease, heart failure, or cardiac arrhythmias like atrial fibrillation. While some of these conditions are genetic, many have risk factors that can be reduced or controlled which include: high blood pressure, high cholesterol, smoking, diabetes (type 2), obesity, diet, and stress.

The American Heart Association has created these "Essential 8" habits to help you lower your cardiovascular heart disease risk:

- 1. Eat a Heart-Healthy Diet:** focus on whole foods, fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean proteins.
- 2. Be Physically Active:** aim for 150 minutes of activity each week - that can be as little as 30 minutes 5 times a week.
- 3. Quit Smoking:** risk begins to drop as soon as a day after quitting! Also avoid second-hand smoke and vaping.
- 4. Maintain a Healthy Weight:** even losing 5-10% of your body weight can lower your risk of high blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease
- 5. Manage Key Numbers:** work with you health provider to monitor your blood pressure, cholesterol, and blood sugar numbers.
- 6. Prioritize Quality Sleep:** most adults need 7-9 hours of sleep a night, teens need 8-10 hours and kids need 9-12 hours. Side note, as an adult, if someone says you snore, you might need a sleep study! Sleep apnea can often lead to atrial fibrillation.
- 7. Practice Good Oral Hygiene:** regular flossing and dental checkups are associated with lower risks of certain health conditions such as atrial fibrillation.
- 8. Manage Stress:** as followers of Jesus, we have our faith to help reduce stress. Spiritual practices such as Bible-reading, prayer, worship, scripture meditation and memorization draw us closer to our source of peace - Jesus! Also, get outside and enjoy the creation He has given us.

### Mark your calendars for these upcoming FCN events:

**Monday, February 2 6:30-8 PM** Heart Safe AED Training here at Karmel - if you are a program leader or volunteer here at Karmel, this training is for you! Learn how to respond in a medical emergency before the ambulance arrives. This includes instruction on how to use the AED.

**Sundays, February 8 & 22** Blood pressure checks in the library after morning worship - track those numbers!

Jackie Hovis

Faith Community Nurse

### Leadership Team Members

Steve Haverinen (Chair), Lee Olson (Vice-chair)  
Betsy Standlee (Secretary),  
Dwight Tonn (Financial Officer)  
Steve Anderson, Cheryl Benson, Jim Olson,  
Pastor Jason Hovis, and Pastor Kohl Hanson

### Ministry Team Leaders

Discipleship - Pastor Jason and Pastor Kohl  
Outreach - Glenda Haverinen  
Hospitality - Sandy Connell  
Congregational Care - Cheryl Benson  
Fellowship - Dawn Swedeen & Shannan Sabby  
Properties - Jim Olson and Tom Filzen

### Women Ministries

## Barrel Ministry

Each month we choose an organization, charity or group that we are asking our church family to donate to:

**February**  
Covenant Ability Network  
Minnesota



Covenant Ability Network of Minnesota offers vibrant community living in each of ten residences in Minnesota. The ministry provides safe and secure Christian homes for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Their homes and programs foster personal growth, encourage independence, and stimulate the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual well-being of those they serve.

This month we will collect the following items to support their residence homes:

- Paper towels
- Napkins
- Toilet paper
- Dish soap
- Disinfecting wipes
- Hand soap
- Paper plates

We are also taking donations of Box Tops for Education and Pop tabs for Ronald McDonald house. There is a four drawer collection area in the kitchen around the corner from the refrigerator.



Food donations can be dropped off in the hallway by the Sunday School office.

### BUDGET REPORT

behind budget \$3,163.59

*Thank you for your faithful giving!*

## February



### Birthdays

- 1 Caleb Anderson
- 1 Jake Zigan
- 4 Clark Anderson
- 7 Adam Carda
- 7 Oliver Wood
- 9 Luanne Browen
- 9 Randy Sieckert
- 11 Eliza Barthel
- 11 Lily Thompson
- 11 Max Thompson
- 12 Jared Koppendrayer
- 12 Kellen Lenzen
- 13 Eric Torkelson
- 14 Jake Anderson
- 14 Leah Anderson
- 14 Zach Anderson
- 15 Michael Spicer
- 16 Alex Melin
- 16 Dick Williams
- 18 Cathy Slater
- 19 Jon Marlton
- 20 Darlene Swanson
- 21 Glenn Swanson
- 22 Bryan Kiewel
- 22 Joan Radeke
- 23 Dan Schoenwald
- 24 JaNahn Barnhouse
- 25 Amelia Alderink
- 25 Ellen Barthel
- 28 Wendy Kiewel

### Anniversaries

- 3 Randy & Crystal Sieckert
- 5 Larry & RaNae Anderson
- 22 Jack & Sherrie Witte
- 23 Mark & Stacy Mosher
- 27 Dale & Kathy Benson
- 27 Dwight & Shirley Tonn

Pray Daily For:



**Elisha Miller**

(Army National Guard)

**Jenna Olson**

(Southeast Asia)

**Seth Olson**

(Army National Guard)

**Arti, Jemima & Letisia**

(Congo Kids)

### February

- 1 Diane Ericson
- 2 Charlie Barnhouse
- 3 Matilda Alderink
- 4 Donna Anderson
- 5 Kyle Gageby
- 6 Avery Bratvold
- 7 Roxanne Murray
- 8 Andrew Barthel
- 9 Gwen Kulkey
- 10 Deb Marlton
- 11 Clark Anderson
- 12 Andrew Filzen
- 13 Karen Danielson
- 14 Albert Lundeen
- 15 Emma Zigan
- 16 DeNae Jensen
- 17 Steve D. Anderson
- 18 Wesley Kennedy
- 19 Aimie Koppendrayer
- 20 Larry Anderson
- 21 Maddy Hoglund
- 22 Luanne Browen
- 23 Dan Herberg
- 24 Tom Barthel
- 25 Denice Melin
- 26 Justin Monson
- 27 Lillie Miller
- 28 Nicole Lenzen

## Leadership Team Highlights

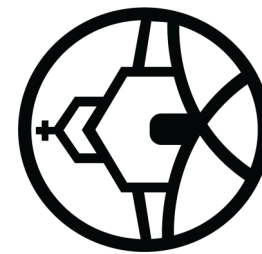
At our January Leadership Team meeting, we were joined by several of the Ministry Team leaders. We heard and shared updates on the various ministries of Karmel. The visitation ministry under Congregational Care has developed a schedule for regular visitations of homebound Karmel family. Pastor Jason will continue regular visits as well. The Properties team has found someone to sand the parking lot as it has gotten extremely icy. They have also developed a form to use in communicating items throughout the church that need repair. Each of the Ministry Team leaders will have the forms available, and they can be placed in the Properties mailbox in the workroom. They also reported an ongoing problem of individuals making changes to the soundboard, which has negatively impacted the quality of our live streams of Sunday morning worship services and has also led to missing equipment. Our sound system is complex and valuable. Any individuals needing the sound system should see Dale Selin for training. The heating system at the parsonage has been fixed, and they are looking into ways to improve the water pressure at church. A youth softball coaches team will be meeting soon to plan the upcoming summer season. Fellowship has several family events planned in the coming months. Check the calendar for more details! We also saw initial plans for a much-needed remodeling of the south half of the church to make it an inviting space for more effective ministry. The Building Committee is in the process of securing 2-3 bids; once bids are in, a congregational meeting will be held for a vote. Thank you for your continued prayers for all the leaders and ministries at Karmel!



## Our author of the month for February is Liz Curtis Higgs

Funny, award-winning author and speaker, Liz Curtis Higgs has presented more than 1,500 inspirational programs for audiences in all fifty states and six foreign countries, including her beloved Scotland. She currently tours with the *Women of Faith* Conferences. She's the author of over thirty books, with well over two million in print, including her nonfiction bestseller, *Bad Girls of the Bible*, her Gold-Medallion award-winning children's book, *The Pumpkin Patch Parable*, and her best-selling historical novels, *Mine Is the Night*, *Here Burns My Candle*, and *Thorn in My Heart*. Liz lives with her husband and too many cats in their 19th-century farmhouse in Kentucky. Liz's favorite Bible verse is Psalms 16:11-- "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

Karmel has several of her books in our library - 3 Weddings and a Giggle. Bookends, and the Lowlands of Scotland series which includes *Thorn in My Heart*, *Fair is the Rose* and *Whence Came a Prince*.



# Karmel Covenant Church FEBRUARY 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>Please let me know if any information needs correcting. Thank you! Cindy</b></p>	<p>2 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 5:00 pm - Women's Pickleball 6:30 - 8:00 pm - Heart Safe Training 6:30 pm - Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>3 5 pm - Leadership Team Meeting 7 pm - WARPED</p>	<p>4 5:30 pm - Family Meal 6:30 pm - AWANA Youth Group</p>	<p>5 5:30 pm - Adult Pickleball</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p>
<p>8 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship 5:00 pm - Super Bowl Party and Potluck</p>	<p>9 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 5:00 pm - Women's Pickleball 6:30 pm - Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>10 2-4 pm Off Our Rockers at the Sundae home 7 pm - WARPED</p>	<p>11 5:30 pm - Family Meal 6:30 pm - AWANA Youth Group</p>	<p>12 5:30 pm - Adult Pickleball</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14 <b>HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY</b></p>
<p>15 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship <b>LBBC Marriage Retreat</b></p>	<p>16 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 5:00 pm - Women's Pickleball 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>17 7 pm - WARPED</p>	<p>18 5:30 pm - Family Meal 6:30 pm - AWANA Youth Group</p>	<p>19 5:30 pm - Adult Pickleball 6:30 pm - Mom's Group <b>Newsletter Items Due</b></p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21 <b>LBBC Marriage Retreat</b> <b>Boundary Waters Winter Retreat</b></p>
<p>22 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:00 am - Worship Baby Bottle Collection</p>	<p>23 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 5:00 pm - Women's Pickleball 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>24 7 pm - WARPED</p>	<p>25 5:30 pm - Family Meal 6:30 pm - AWANA Appreciate Your Leader Night 6:30 pm - Youth Group</p>	<p>26 5:30 pm - Adult Pickleball</p>	<p>27</p>	