



KARMEL NEWS

DECEMBER 2025

From the Desk of Pastor Jason

Greetings friends,

In Isaiah 7, King Ahaz of Judah found himself terrified. An alliance between Aram and Samaria threatened his kingdom, and fear gripped his heart. Into this moment of crisis, the Lord spoke through the prophet Isaiah: "Ask the LORD your God for a sign."

But Ahaz refused. Perhaps he thought it would be presumptuous. Perhaps his fear had already convinced him that God was distant. Whatever the reason, his silence revealed a deeper problem—he doubted whether God was truly with him.

So the Lord gave a sign anyway: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel"—God with us. And those two threatening kings? They would soon be gone.

Ahaz's story raises uncomfortable questions for us. Are we, like him, afraid to ask the Lord for a sign when we face our own wars—relational conflicts, financial pressures, health crises, or spiritual battles? Do we live as though God is with us, or does our anxiety suggest we've forgotten His presence?

This Christmas season, we find ourselves in different situations, facing different wars. Some of us are battling loneliness. Others are navigating family tensions or financial uncertainty. Still others are wrestling with grief or doubt. The circumstances vary, but the question remains the same: Is God with His people?

The ancient promise given to a fearful king now finds its reality in the risen Christ. Jesus is Immanuel—not as a distant hope, but as a present reality. He is the One who died for us, making us right with God. His Spirit intercedes for us even when we don't know what to pray. This risen King walks with us as we carry out His Great Commission, bringing the Good News to every corner of the earth and to every corner of our hearts.

We don't have to be afraid to ask. We don't have to doubt His presence. God is with us—not because our circumstances are peaceful, but because Christ has come.

May you experience the peace and presence of the risen Christ this Christmas season.

Peace,

Pastor Jason



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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

Karmel Covenant Church History

Karmel's quilted nativity banner was made by Connie Nelson. Connie chose a large variety of batik fabrics which gives this quilt its beautiful shading of colors. The technique used in making the banner is called stained glass applique. Connie cut all the many pieces you can see in the quilt. These pieces were then fused to the large background piece to make the nativity scene. After the pieces were in place, Connie used strips of black fabric to finish all the raw or cut edges where the pieces of fabric meet. The result is the lovely stained glass applique quilt that we get to enjoy each December when the banner is hung at Karmel.

Written by Deb Wilkinson

(Connie and her late husband, Duane, moved to Texas after their time here at Karmel.)



Pastor Kohl

It's hard to really comprehend just how frightening it would have been to be one of those Exodus Israelites. To have witnessed the plagues of judgment (especially the angel of death), the violent rending of the Red Sea, the pillar of cloud and fire. Sure, you might be grateful, but keep in mind that, in all of this, you are taking Moses at his word. He's the only one who really knows what's going on.

And then, to stand at the foot of Mount Sinai as the Lord envelops the mountain. Exodus 19:16-18 recounts:

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.

Terrifying. I'd probably be trembling right along with them. This in spite of the fact that they knew that this was the God who had just rescued them!

Now, the Israelites had plenty of wrong reasons for fearing the Lord's presence. Most people in their day saw their gods as capricious, ill-tempered superhumans who reacted on a whim. The Lord was (and is) not like that. As he reveals in Exodus 34, the Lord is slow-to-anger and merciful. The Lord is a very steady, consistent person who does not act on a whim.

Exodus paints a complex picture of God, and rightfully so. God is not a man that we should comprehend him. Our perpetual temptation is to "flatten" God so that we can get a grasp on him. We do this by focusing on only one (or a few) of his characteristics and neglecting others. In the process, however, we distort even the few characteristics that we do focus on. For example, I think our tendency today (at least in our culture) is to focus on those aspects of God's character that are "nice" – his love, compassion, and kindness, for example. And God *is* those things, of course. Jesus cared deeply for people and exhibited the deepest level of compassion this world has ever seen – to friends and enemies alike. The cross is the ultimate expression of this.

But I am also reminded of Jesus' appearance in Revelation 1:12-18.

Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength.

When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades.

John, the disciple who walked with Jesus for 3 years, who called himself "the beloved disciple" falls to his knees in terror before the risen and glorious Lord Jesus.

Of course, Jesus tells him not to fear, and for good reason. When the one who holds the keys of Death and Hades is on your side, rest assured everything is going to be okay. But it's just that – Jesus, the God-man we call friend *holds the keys of Death and Hades*. Do we really comprehend how powerful and glorious Jesus is? Do we fear Jesus – that healthy awe and respect for the lordliness of our creator and judge?

Let's not forget who we worship.

KARMEL KIDS CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

PRACTICE IS

DURING WORSHIP SERVICE

Kids dismissed before songs of praise

**ONE ADDITIONAL
REQUIRED PRACTICE**

SATURDAY, 12/13 AT 9 AM

Kids kindergarten through 6th grade welcome!

PERFORMANCE

SUNDAY, 12/14 AT 10:30 AM

UNISON
**CRAZY, BUSY,
PEACEFUL,
HOLY NIGHT**
A SIMPLE PLUS CHRISTMAS MUSICAL FOR KIDS

CREATED BY
JEFF AND DANA ANDERSON



Church Facility Use

There is a calendar request form on our church website. Please use it to submit a request for church facility use, if you have difficulty, please contact Cindy in the office.

Leadership Team Highlights

At our most recent Leadership Team meeting, we began with a time of prayer for those in our Karmel family in need of God's healing and help. We heard updates on Confirmation and the reforming of the Visitation Ministry. We also discussed the value of having intentional ministries versus independent programs. Work is ongoing in improving communication and the usefulness of our database and online directory (Amplify). We finalized our recommendation to the Building Committee after prayerful discussion on which of the available options we felt best met the needs of the individuals and families God is ministering to through the various ministries of Karmel. The end of the year is almost here, and we have begun looking at budgets for next year in preparation for the Annual Meeting on January 18, 2026. Please continue to pray with us for God's wisdom, direction, and provision as we strive with Karmel to Love God, Serve Others, and Make Jesus Followers!



**Off Our Rockers
Christmas Dinner**
Tuesday, December 9th
At 12:30 pm
At the home of Tammy Olson
36100 Xenon Street NW
Princeton

\$5 per person

Lake Beauty Update

Upcoming events are:

10th Annual LBBC
Lutefisk and Meatball Dinner Dec 6
Beginning at 3:00
Last seating at 5:30
Call to reserve a spot by December 1
320-732-3218

Young Adult Retreat Dec 31-Jan 2

If you have any questions about things offered at Lake Beauty get ahold of Tom or Kelly Filzen.

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 Swedeem & 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:

DECEMBER New Pathways Shelter & Support



This month we are collecting items for New Pathways. Their program serves homeless adults with children by giving them a safe place to stay, meals, and access to case management services and skills training services. The following items are needed to help support their program:

- Liquid Hand Soap
- Disinfecting Wipes
- Kleenex
- Glass, Multi-purpose and Toilet bowl cleaner



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

BUDGET REPORT
Behind budget \$31,005.84

Thank you for your faithful giving!

December Birthdays



- Charlie Barnhouse
- Lynette Gageby
- Mary Haverinen
- Betsy Standlee
- Josi Wood
- Anthony Kiewel
- Nathan Kiewel
- Maizy Zigan
- Tom Filzen
- Andrew Barthel
- John Griswold
- Phyllis Anderson
- Melissa Hughes
- Amy Johnson
- Lori Gambino
- Dwayne Hass
- Nicole Lenzen
- Tyler Herberg
- Angela Clark
- Zachery Wood
- Becca Benson
- Jessica Morrell
- Nancy Bonkoski
- Dan Murray
- Hazel Sommers
- Tristin Kinnard
- Gary Tonn
- Karen Eberle
- Dave Miller
- Waylon Nelson
- Nick Anderson
- Elijah Fluth

Anniversaries

- Lloyd & JoAnn Swedeem
- Ron & Cindy Monson
- Steve Pederson & Dawn Swedeem
- Justin & Crystal Kennedy
- George & Mary Duvall
- Neil & Nancy Bonkoski

Pray Daily For:



MaCinzey Maas
(US Army)

Elisha Miller
(Army National Guard)

Jenna Olson
(Southeast Asia)

Seth Olson
(Army National Guard)

Arti, Jemima & Letisia
(Congo Kids)

December

- Kelly Filzen
- Dana Koppendrayer
- Adriana Erdman
- Amy Anderson
- Zach Melin
- Josiah Ruth
- JaNahn Barnhouse
- Cam Senlycki
- Thea Melin
- Annabelle Milles
- Steve Haverinen
- Barrett Nelson
- Julie Flom
- Andy Anderson
- Trinity Lenzen
- Andrea Huss
- Dale Selin
- Oskar Melin
- Amee Cooper
- Chris Anderson
- Lydia Smisson
- Julie Anderson
- Danyon Sommers
- Mathias Ruth
- Lindsey Melin
- Tom Filzen
- Leddi Huss
- Colleen Insley
- Dave Standlee
- Harley Melin
- Jessica Ruth

Faith and Wellness

With the Christmas holiday season coming and a time of year when daylight time lessens, when some folks feel more pressure and demands on their lives, some become more depressed. I think of a verse that tells us what we can do to make this time of year less hard to bear. Ephesians 4:32 says "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

Kindness to others gives definite health benefits. Kindness provides an increase in self-esteem, can help us and those to whom we are kind feel more calm-less depressed. It can increase our happiness, cause us to have fewer aches and pains. It can help increase our lifespan; one article I read said "People 55 and older who volunteer for two or more organizations have an impressive 44% lower likelihood of dying earlier;" "Perpetually kind people have 23% less cortisol (the stress hormone) and age slower than the average population." We also derive pleasure from helping others. Kindness stimulates the production of serotonin, a chemical that "heals your wounds, calms you down, and makes you happy."

Other positive things that can happen when you show kindness is it can help lower blood pressure, increase a positive mood, and help produce endorphins, "the brain's natural painkiller".

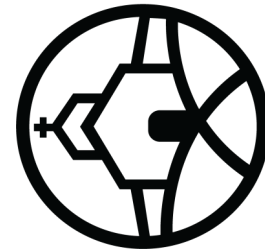
Kindness can be taught so we can work at teaching our children how to be kind when they are young. We are more likely to be kind when we see others being kind. It may help others, seeing us doing a kind deed, to also be kind themselves in some way.

With Christmas coming, let us all have thankful hearts for God's giving us Jesus and work to show kindness to those around us. It will also promote us to be more healthy in body, mind and spirit as we serve our Lord.

A happy and blessed Christmas to everyone!



Awana Family Meals

As part of our Awana program, Karmel volunteers serve a family fellowship meal each Wednesday from 5:30-6:15pm. While everyone is welcome, it is especially helpful for busy families who have children in the Awana program. It's a chance for everyone to share a meal with their family and friends before the evening starts. It's an extra special bonus that it's a meal on a busy night that parents don't have to prepare!! To help continue with this beloved tradition, the Fellowship team is looking for volunteers to cook and serve these weekly meals. If you have considered doing this but aren't sure you're comfortable doing it alone, ask a friend (or two) to do it with you. It's half as "scary" and twice as FUN!!! Plus, we now have a handbook at the church that includes instructions, helpful tips and even easy meal ideas and recipes. We've also increased the reimbursement budget to make it even easier! If you'd like to help cook and serve a meal, please use the QR code below to access the SignUp form - or contact Shannan Sabby by phone/text at 763-567-0711.



Karmel Covenant Church DECEMBER 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
7 10:00 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship	1 10:00 am - Women's Bible Study 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 5:00 pm - Lady's Pickleball 6:30 pm - Lady's Bible Study 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study	2 5:00 pm Leadership Team Meeting	3 5:30 - Family Meal 6:30 pm - AWANA / Youth Group	4 5:30 pm Adult Pickleball	5	6 9-10:30am Christmas Program Practice
7 9:00 am - Sunday School 10:30 am - Worship	8 10:00 am - Women's Bible Study 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 5:00 pm - Lady's Pickleball 6:30 pm - Lady's Bible Study 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study	9 12:30 pm Off Our Rockers Christmas Dinner @ Tammy Olson's	10 5:30 - Family Meal 6:30 pm - AWANA / Youth Group	11 5:30 pm Adult Pickleball	12	13
14 10:30 am - Christmas Program	15 10:00 am - Women's Bible Study 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 5:00 pm - Lady's Pickleball 6:30 pm - Lady's Bible Study 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study	16 Annual Reports Due!	17 5:30 - Family Meal 6:30 pm - AWANA Christmas Party	18 5:30 pm Adult Pickleball 6:30 pm Mom's Group	19	20
21 10:30 am - Worship	22 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 10:00 am - Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study	23 Newsletter Items Due!  7:00 pm Simply Christmas	24 No AWANA or Youth Group	25  Merry Christmas!!	26	27
28 10:30 am - Worship	29 10:00 am - Men's Bible Study 10:00 am - Women's Bible Study 7:00 pm - Men's Bible Study	30	31 No AWANA or Youth Group			If any information needs correcting, please let me know Thank you! Cindy