

#findingspirit

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The Epistle - September 2019

ONE SERVICE on Sunday, September 1 at 10:00a.m. & Popsicles with our Pastor!

Sunday, September 1, marks an important day in the life of our congregation. Senior Pastor Lori Bievenour will preach at our ONE SERVICE at 10:00a.m, and we'll send her off on her renewal/sabbatical time with popsicles following worship. Come and join in the celebration! (You can read more about the sabbatical/renewal on Page 6.)

Popsicle flavors are listed below... Note the variety! These flavors are intended to be a reflection of our various experiences of faith. We all experience God in different ways, through different events, and call The Sacred by different names. What we might discover during this time of renewal might be surprising, just like these flavor combinations. What flavor will you choose? (Popsicles marked with (V) are vegan.) Questions? Contact Carol Dobrotka at c_dobrotka@yahoo.com

> Pineapple Basil (V) Mango Ginger (V) Strawberry Mint (V) Pink Lemonade (V) Arnie P (V) Avocado (V)

Thai Coffee Not So Hot Chocolate Dark Chocolate Sea Salt Toasted Coconut Cream Strawberry Cream Key Lime Pie Cookie Batter



All Church Picnic & Education Kickoff September 8 at 12:30p.m.

The All Church Picnic/Education Kickoff Celebration is coming up Sunday September 8th at 12:30 at West Park. We have reserved the large pavilion adjacent to the restrooms and the playground, where there is a water feature for all to cool off. We will provide both beef and black bean burgers, please bring a dish to share. The Education Team will be providing some games, feel free to bring your soccer balls and lawn games to share. This is a great chance for folks from both services to play together! Please sign up in Fellowship Hall so we can get an idea of how many burgers to provide.

September 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Combined Worship Service 10a.m.	2 Office is Closed for Labor Day	3 First Day of Preschool	4	5 Staff 1:30 Worship Staff to follow	6	7 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m. Tamil School
Popsicles with our Pastor				Handbell 6- 7pm Choir 7- 8:30pm		2-4pm
8 Worship 8:30 Fellowship Hour 9:45a.m. Worship 11:00 All Church Pic- nic	9	10 Migrant Quilt Project 12- 1:15pm in Parlor Young Adult Group 7pm	11	12 Ministry Coun- cil 7-8:30p.m. Handbells 6- 7pm Choir 7- 8:30pm	13	14 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m. Tamil School 2-4pm
15 Worship 8:30 Fellowship Hour 9:45a.m. Listening Ses- sion 10-11am Worship 11:00 Youth Group 12:30-2pm	16 Waterford HOA 6-9pm Finance & Ops 6:30- 8pm	17 Music Team 6:45pm	18	19 Men's Break- fast 8a.m. Handbells 6- 7pm Choir 7- 8:30pm	20 Men's Re- treat Movie Night	21 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m. Men's Re- treat Tamil School 2-4pm
22 Worship 8:30 Fellow- ship Hour 9:45 Listening Ses- sion 10-11am Worship 11:00 Moms Demand Action 2-5pm	23 Twins & Multiples 6:30pm	24 Migrant Quilt Project 6:30-7:30pm in Parlor Governance 6:30pm Young Adult Group 7pm	25 Missions Team 6:30pm	26 Handbells 6- 7pm Choir 7- 8:30pm	27	28 Parlor in Use 9-10a.m. Leadership Retreat
29 Worship 8:30 Brunch Hour & Pray Day 9:45a.m. Worship 11:00 Ecclesiastical Council 3pm	30					

From Your Clergy Team

Lori Bievenour Becca Lockwood Sam Locke lori@stpeterscarmel.org becca@stpeterscarmel.org ministryintern@stpeterscarmel.org

317-846-6882 x222 317-846-6882 x223

From Lori

I am writing this on my last day in the office prior to renewal/sabbatical. My body, my mind, and my soul are so full of emotions and questions and just "stuff". I am both excited and nervous. One minute I want to bolt out the front door. The next minute, I want to linger in the dark sanctuary. This is sacred time.

People have asked me what I hope for sabbatical/renewal... I hope for rest. I hope for reconnection with God. I hope for improved health (my throat is sore, and I am losing my voice as I write this, but a regular exercise regimen is also on my list). I hope for some house projects to be finished. I hope to read some books and listen to some music and take some walks with my dog. I hope to be a less distracted parent, spouse, and family member. I hope to grieve some recent losses; I need to really cry. I hope to purge a few closets and to clean a number of spaces. I hope to retreat with some dear colleagues and some strangers. I hope to stretched in my faith. Most of all, I hope to take the kinds of deep breaths that help me to know God and myself in profound ways.

And what do I hope for our congregation? Well, if I am truly dreaming, I hope to return to all smiles and transformed hearts and spirits as a result of the stories told in worship this fall. I hope for my colleagues to have felt grounded, and I hope they miss me. I hope for an increase in pledges to support a budget with plenty of wiggle-room for new ministries and fully-funded staff positions. I hope for the building to have few issues and the grounds to be free from weeds. I hope for our leaders to have all the volunteers that they need for all of the ministries that they promote. I hope that no one hurts. I hope that there are no technology glitches and that no one feels overlooked or invisible when they visit our congregation for the first time or the 100th time. I hope that complete strangers come to know our congregation in a way that makes their hearts sing. I hope that you can stand up for justice boldly (not sure how, but I am sure an opportunity will present itself) and that someone outside of our community notices. I hope that you can surprise yourselves with how much faith and wisdom and power you have. I hope that you trust that little voice that is speaking to you right now...

And I know that in both cases – in the case of my personal experience of renewal and that of the congregation – all of these dreams will not happen. Some of my hopes will have to remain hopes.

And that is ok. In fact, that might be one of the great parts about a time of sabbatical/renewal... it is a time to make space, but not necessarily to fill it. It's a time to reflect and push to new boundaries. It's a time for deep breaths, a bit of comfort food, and new experiences that will shape the future. Mostly, sabbatical/renewal is about staying present to what The Sacred is offering and trusting that there is new life within... within me, within our congregation, within the world.

Thank you for gifting me with this time, St. Peter's. I already miss you – truly. And I also know that I need to be away for a season. I look forward to THIS Sunday, September 1, when I will preach one last time (10:00 a.m. worship) AND to December 1, when I will return to be among you again, welcoming the season of Advent with an expectant spirit, a renewed body and mind, and a humble heart. I know that I will have much to learn, and many stories to hear, from your adventures from this time of renewal and our time apart. May God's love surprise us along the way! Until we meet again... Lori

From Your Clergy Team

Lori Bievenour Becca Lockwood Sam Locke lori@stpeterscarmel.org becca@stpeterscarmel.org ministryintern@stpeterscarmel.org 317-846-6882 x222 317-846-6882 x223

From Becca

And we're off! Our program year is underway and I am so excited. We have some really powerful and intentional programming and worship planned for this fall. It's going to be fantastic! Part of our intentionality has been asking the question(s): What does the congregation and the world need right now? And over and over again in various settings Lori, Sam, and I have felt that what we need most is to listen to each other and learn how to best show up for each other along the way. To that end:

- This fall we will tell and hear the stories of twenty-four of our fellow siblings.
- Our prayer station will invite us to look inward and outward for the Spirit.
- We will have a leadership retreat that grounds and inspires our leaders.
- We will have opportunities to engage stories in the Bible through Lectionary, Youth Lectionary, and Women and the Word.
- Our youth will continue to bond and form friendships through Youth Group, 456, Worship & Wonder, and LAUGH.
- We will have a chance to continue to learn how to listen and converse well through Politics and the Purple Church 2.0 and Spiritual Life Groups that focus on the Sacred Art of Listening.
- We will have opportunities to serve others through Family Promise, Carmel UMC Food Pantry and East 10th Street UMC.

While I'm sure there are more examples of the vibrancy of St. Peter's, I encourage you to find a way to engage and be present this fall in a new way. Lean into and show up for each other. There are so many ways for us to Be The Church. Listen for what the Spirit is calling you to do.

For me, I heard the spirit within me longing to connect with you during this season. Wednesdays will be a designated day for just that: for me to be with you. That could be anything from a walk in the woods, to a coffee/tea, to ice cream, to a home visit, a church visit, etc. Several of you have already approached me to set up a time and I can't wait. (To be clear, I'm always available other days of the week as well Sunday-Thursday, but it felt important to designate a special day for being together.) Here's to a season of being together and listening to the Spirit!

Listening to the Spirit also takes patience and acceptance. We heard back from the Clergy Renewal Grant, and I was not awarded the grant this year. The plan is to reapply in April and hopefully be awarded the Renewal grant for a sabbatical in the summer of 2021. However, even if I am not awarded the grant, I will still plan on taking sabbatical during the same time period--just less international traveling. ;)

The Bible Doesn't Say That! Summer Sermon Series Recap

by Sam Locke, Ministry Intern

We hope you enjoyed our summer sermon series ..."The Bible Doesn't Say That." Over the course of the summer, we've explored phrases many of us thought were biblical but aren't and many passages that are often taken out of context. The series was designed to give us a chance to dig deeper into our embedded beliefs and to encourage us to pay close attention to context in important biblical passages. Here is a brief recap of what we learned in August:

Week 8 "I know the plans I Have for you"

God does have a plan, but it often doesn't work on the timetable that we want it to. God works detailed, complex plans that unfolds over thousands of years and are not designed to let us dismiss the important work of Christianity because we don't see immediate results.

Week 9 "God helps those who help themselves"

We learned this passage wasn't found in the Bible at all and that the converse is true ... God helps everyone, even those whom we humans often judge as unworthy. Of course we should help ourselves, but we shouldn't do so while blissfully ignoring others.

Week 10 "Do not judge"

We should judge! But, careful, we should judge as God would want us to ... calling out societal injustice and taking action. But this comes with a catch - we have to be open to judgment ourselves, looking for accountability as we fully embody the values Christ taught us.

Week 11 "This too shall pass"

This too shall pass...it can be a comfort to remember that some moments (particularly unfun ones) won't last forever, eventually they will pass. And it's a good reminder that because all moments will eventually pass, end, or transform into something else; savor the present and don't rush through life.



Senior Pastor Sabbatical/Renewal Period

September 2 – November 30

September 2 marks the first day of Senior Pastor Lori Bievenour's renewal/sabbatical, which will continue through November 30. For more details about what she might be doing during this time and what sabbatical is all about, please refer to the August 2019 Epistle, which can be found online (or in your email inbox).

Formative Congregations Grant

The Center for Congregations awarded us (and only a handful of other congregations) a Formative Congregations grant. The grant totals \$50,000, and all of that money must be used within our congregation. Our proposal was bold; there are many opportunities planned for St. Peter's over the course of the next year. We are excited to be offered this opportunity and are hopeful that you'll enjoy the many things that have been made possible by this grant!

The Art of Listening - Success!

Over 30 people attended The Art of Listening sessions led by Lori Bievenour each week in August. We laughed, we questioned, we explored, we conversed, we challenged... and most of all, we listened. Thanks to all who participated and all who prayed us through this experience!



Focus Groups: Envisioning St. Peter's Future Sign Up by September 8

We are seeking to hear ideas from the congregation about four large ideas: St. Peter's UCC identity, values, impact inside and outside our walls, and how we reconcile our vision with our budget and our capacity. These sessions will be facilitated by Daniel Meyers, Staff Support Team Lead and Seth Kreigh, Generosity Team Lead. We have scheduled four groups with room from 10-12 people in each group. (If the groups fill up and more interest is indicated, we will attempt to facilitate more groups.) Your input will be included as we seek to hear wider themes on these big ideas. Ultimately a report will be put together and shared with the entire congregation. By signing up, you are not committing to actually making any decisions at this time, but you are lending your voice to a deeper conversation beyond our Annual Meeting that will hopefully inform a set of questions and decisions in our future. Please join us for honest, reflective, and deeper conversation on who we are, what we value, and what impact we can make. The following Focus Groups have space available. Please RSVP for a specific date by Sunday, September 8 through Realm or by emailing Laurie Hesselink at office@stpeterscarmel.org.

Sunday, 9/22, between services, 10-11 am Wednesday, 10/2, 7-8 pm Sunday, 10/13, between services, 10-11 am

Storytellers in Worship

Worship is a sacred time of prayer, scripture study, and storytelling, among other things. It's a time for us to be together and to explore our understandings of God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. It is a time for rituals and a time for spiritual formation. And this fall, we have an incredible opportunity for you!

24 storytellers – all members of our congregation – have volunteered to share *their* stories of faith with you during worship. The inspiration was a dream that Lori had many years ago: a dream in which people were telling each other the stories that they often told her and the pastoral staff. It was beautiful. Truly, the pastoral staff loves hearing your stories; the contents is inspiring, heart-wrenching, bewildering, tragic, laughable, and the list goes on. In a dream, Lori imagined those stories spreading into the world and transforming communities. It's a vision that she can barely describe with words. The Formative Congregations Grant is making Lori's dream a reality.

A different person will tell their story at the 8:30 and 11:00 worship services September 8 – November 24. The stories will be podcasted so that you can listen to them later, but we encourage you to attend as many as you can... LIVE! Here's the list of storytellers and the dates/times when they'll be sharing their stories. All stories will be recorded and posted to our website via podcast. We realize that most people won't attend all 24 services this fall in order to catch all of the stories live, but we also realize that people might want to hear many (if not all) of the stories. By all means, check out our website for these recordings!

	8:30	11:00
8-Sep	Holly Irwin/Kelly Bradbury	Holly Irwin/Kelly Bradbury
15-Sep	Liz Chandler	Stevi Cook
22-Sep	Juj Query	Ginger Collier
29-Sep	David Hoff	Suzy Storm
6-Oct	Julia Stolle	Elizabeth Roe
13-Oct	Sue Nye	Craig Penquite
20-Oct	Jeff Lefevere	Christie Kievit
27-Oct	Chrissy Searcy	Mark Wallis
3-Nov	Barb Hawkins	Barb James
10-Nov	Dennis Heavin	Carol Dobrotka
17-Nov	Katy Palmer	Jaesoo Kim
24-Nov	Diane Carr	Patti Peck

More Time with A Storyteller

After each storyteller shares their story, YOU will have an opportunity to connect more deeply with them. Just fill out the slip of paper in the pew and indicate that you would appreciate further conversation with that particular storyteller. If you can, share why you've connected to this person's story. The story tellers will each be given a \$100 gift card (courtesy of the Formative Congregations Grant), and we are asking them to continue the conversation with those who are interested... maybe over lunch or coffee or dinner. It's up to the story tellers how many or how few people they connected with post-story. We are trusting that the Holy Spirit will guide us all as we share our stories.

Storyteller Retreat and Art Display

In August, most of the storytellers participated in a retreat in downtown Indianapolis so that they could meet each other and share part of this journey together. The results of their time together were stunning! Many had profound experiences creating art while thinking about the stories they'd tell in worship later this fall. Each storyteller is being asked to contribute either this piece of art or a piece of their choosing to our Art Gallery this fall. Look for their art in late September/early October



Spiritual Life Groups

In recent years, we have found Spiritual Life Groups to be a valuable way to build relationships, explore topics of faith, and support our faith community. This fall, we will offer another opportunity for you to engage in hope-filled and curious experiences, held in members' homes throughout greater Indianapolis. Our guide will be the book *Conversation the Sacred Art: Practicing Presence in an Age of Distraction* by Diane M. Millis. Groups will last 6-8 weeks (each group determines their own schedule), and books will be provided through the generosity of our grant. Questions? Contact Becca Lockwood at <u>bec-ca@stpeterscarmel.org</u>. Please sign up now for one of the following groups in Fellowship Hall or <u>of-fice@stpeterscarmel.org</u>:

> Jon & Diane Crider Monday evenings Ben Keckler Wednesday evenings Jill Olinger Thursday mornings Pat & Randy Wahl TBD

Brunch Hour & Pray Day on September 29 at 9:45a.m.

Mark Your Calendars! A Brunch Hour will be held at 9:45a.m. on Sunday, September 29, and after about a half hour of eating, Pray Day will begin!

What is Pray Day?

Pray Day is a way of supporting the many ministries of St. Peter's UCC in prayer. It's a simple concept: Team Leaders will go to the locations of their ministries, and we will pray for leaders, participants, ministries, and ourselves.

How will it work?

At 9:45, come to church for Brunch Hour. Our Hospitality Team will greet you. Randy Wahl is heading up the food for this meal – stay tuned for details! Our Music Team will offer a sung blessing. And then, we will eat.

At 10:15, we will break up into four groups. (When you come to brunch, you'll be given one of four colors on a piece of paper: Red, Blue, Yellow, Green.) Generosity Team Members will lead each group.

Then Green Group will go to the Playground, where they will be greeted by Tammy Drummond, Preschool Team Leader. They'll hear a bit about that ministry and then will pray for all who are touched by our Preschool ministry.

The Red Group will go to the Labyrinth, where they will be greeted by Chrissy Searcy, Spiritual Life Team Leader. They'll hear about the many ministries of the Spiritual Life Team, including the Labyrinth, retreats, Spiritual Life Groups, and more! Then, they'll pray for those ministries.

The Blue Group will go to the Native Habitat, where they will be greeted by Katie Lukes, Missions Team Leader. They'll hear about the various missions of St. Peter's UCC – from Cincinnati to the Border to the Native Habitat to Family Promise – and then they'll pray for those ministries.

The Yellow Group will go to Room 11, where they will be greeted by Lori Radford, Education Team Leader. They'll hear about the many educational opportunities and faith formation experiences available to all ages at St. Peter's UCC, and then they'll pray for those ministries.

And then... WE ROTATE! Our Generosity Team Members will lead each of the groups to each of the locations. Ministries will be prayed for, questions might be asked, and fun will be had.

At the end of the rotations, we'll meet back in Fellowship Hall for a work from our Building & Grounds Team and Technology Team, followed by a final blessing from our Music Team.

What do I need to do?

Pray (now and on Pray Day). Show Up (on Pray Day). And that's it.

Why are we doing this?

Prayer matters. Our various ministries matter. Fellowship matters. Eating together matters. Bottom line: There are many ways to be the church and many ways to pray and many ways to share a meal together, and we are doing some of each of those with this experiment. And maybe the real answer is: Why Not?

September Prayer Station: Labyrinths

Our Prayer Station for the month of September includes several finger labyrinths and some mazes intended to be traced without sight. The labyrinth is an ancient tool used for discernment. It was only one way to the center and the same way back out. We encourage you to take one of these labyrinths or mazes with you to your seat while you worship, returning it when you are finished with it so that someone else can have their own journey. Enjoy listening to your heart as your fingers trace these sacred paths, and know that each of us is embarking on a journey as this sabbatical period begins.

Lay Leadership: The Heart of Our Congregation Retreats on September 28 and January 25

Did you know that the United Church of Christ (our denomination) practices congregational polity? This means that every local congregation is its own highest authority. Thus, it is the CONGREGATION that makes decisions for our church, not a national setting or other constituency. In our context, this means that we have a congregational meeting to vote on things like our budget and officers. Our LAY LEADERS do the work of our congregation, and these leaders are amazing.

Every year, our Leadership Team (members of the Governance, Finance & Operations, and Ministry Councils) gets together for a retreat prior to the kickoff of our program year. This year, we are doing things a little bit differently. Our Leadership Team will have a retreat on September 28 at ArtMix in Indianapolis (www.artmixindiana.org) and again on January 25 with representatives from Fearless Dialogues (www.fearlessdialogues.com). There will be about 30 leaders gathered to enjoy a creative and spirit-filled experiences. Please pray for our leaders... and thank you!

Old Horizon Banners & New Advent Banners

Our "Horizon Banners" have been hung! They were made with a local fabric artist, Stephanie Robertson, in 2014. Members of our congregation painted the banners with Stephanie's help, and the words on the bottoms of the banners are words that we used to describe our congregation. As these banners guide us into the fall season, let us remember that there is always another horizon for us to journey towards! And, as if that's not enough, a surprise is in the works! Rachel Enlow, an artist among us, is creating a new set of banners for our Advent worship experience. We can hardly wait to share them with you... Please pray her through this creative experience of sharing her faith through art!

History Reception & All Saints Sunday on November 3

Mark your calendars! On Sunday, November 3, we will have a special reception between services that honors our history. Our storytellers on that Sunday will share their connections to our congregation and other UCC congregations from many decades ago. An assortment of photos and mementos from our predecessor congregations (Central Avenue Reformed and Carrollton Avenue Evangelical and Reformed) will be on display. We will be attempting to contact those who had connections to these congregations, so if you know of people who might enjoy an invitation, please contact Carol Dobrotka at c_dobrotka@yahoo.com, who is coordinating this reception!

Scripture Series this Fall: The Psalms

Becca and Sam will offer theological reflections on the Storytellers' stories paired with a reading from the Psalms each week during worship. Why the Psalms? Because the Psalms include the entire range of human emotion and are some of the most beautifully written prose and poetry in the entire Bible. We will listen for God in the words of scripture AND in the words of one another. We hope you enjoy this journey through scripture... and if you're planning ahead, we'll return to the Gospel of Matthew on December 1, just in time for Advent.

One Service and Fearless Dialogues Congregational Experience on Sunday, March 15, 2020

Mark your calendars NOW! Our Formative Congregations Grant is offering us a unique opportunity. We are bringing animators from Fearless Dialogues (<u>www.fearlessdialogues.com</u>) to our congregation for a special experience on Sunday, March 15, 2020. Worship will be different on that day. We are still working out the details, but for now, know that we will all be together, and we will be nurturing our faith in new ways on that morning. Our leadership will experience a version of Fearless Dialogues in January, and then a few weeks later, the opportunity will be offered to the entire congregation. We are VERY excited about this spirit-filled, creative, and challenging offering; please pray us through the development process and plan to attend!

Music Team

Team Leader: Sarah Scholl Music Director : Cheryl Keckler musicministrylead@stpeterscarmel.org musicdirector@stpeterscarmel.org

Music Year is starting – JOIN IN!

Schools are back in session. Labor Day weekend will come and go. So that means it is time for the MU-SIC YEAR at St. Peter's to get back in the swing of things. First rehearsals for **Handbells and Chancel Choir** are on **Thursday, September 5**.

Handbells from 6:00-7:00 p.m. in the Sanctuary

Chancel Choir from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the Music Room

For more specific information on our choirs, please contact Cheryl at 317-213-1871 or <u>musicdirec-</u> <u>tor@stpeterscarmel.org</u>. Music is good for your health, your stress level, and for the community. Come join in music making at St. Peter's. New members are <u>always</u> welcomed.

Music for Children and Youth

Music for children and youth (grade 2 and older) will start on **Sunday, September 8 from 9:45-10:15 in the Music Room**. We will begin the year singing an anthem on **October 6, World Communion Sunday**. Through the year we will have different music opportunities – ringing chimes, playing Orff instruments and more singing. Come share your talents and join in the music making!

Thanks for the Summer Music

Another terrific summer of music! A huge thank you to all who volunteered their talents and participated in the music program. We had a great variety of music – styles and instrumentation. Everything was wonderful. Thank you!

Singing Visit

We are in the process of planning a singing visit, so watch the weekly announcements for the definite information. What is a Singing Visit? We visit someone in their home or a residential facility and make music (mostly singing) for and with them. These are fun times with lots of joy and laughter.

Christmas Caroling on December 8 Hark! The Herald Angels Sing

A future date for your calendar – **Sunday, December 8, 12:30 p.m.** Following a soup lunch, we will break into groups and share Christmas music with others. Watch for details and sign-up.

Please share comments regarding our music program with any team member: Heather Kane, Don Kaufman, Sarah Scholl, Jim Vandivier; Addie Yoder, organist; or Cheryl Keckler, Music Director.

Missions Team

Team Leader: Katie Lukes

missionslead@stpeterscarmel.org

The Missions Team is looking for new members!

Are you interested in getting involved to further missions at St. Peter's? We'd love your help! Get in touch with Katie Lukes through Realm or at <u>missionslead@stpeterscarmel.org</u>.

Crossing Over: The Migrant Quilt Project

St. Peter's, along with the Indiana Interchurch Center, is privileged to host the next installation of the Migrant Quilt Project which began when Jody Ipsen learned that a record 282 people died when trying to cross the border in the Tucson Sector between 2004 and 2005. She has worked individually and with others to document every person who died in the Tucson sector of the desert since the year 2000. "Los Desconosidos", the unknown ones, along with those whose names are known, are listed on a quilt each year. Those who have participated in the border immersion experience at The Good Shepherd UCC have had the opportunity to view some of these quilts. Our group, and those across the county who have seen the quilts are taken aback by the impact they have. The exhibit will be on display in our sanctuary and at the Interchurch Center from August 3rd through September 26th. We encourage you to spend some time experiencing them in both locations and honoring the memory of those whose courage is sometimes beyond our imagination.

At St. Peter's, we are offering opportunities to visit the exhibit while you learn more about the situation at our Southern border with Mexico. Come to learn about the history of immigration in the United States and the role we have played in the current crisis, and to hear the stories of some who have visited the border and are engaged in ministry to migrants there. Two programs will be offered in September. The following programs will take place in the parlor at St. Peter's:

Tuesday, Sept 10 at 12:00 - 1:15 pm. Jim Armstrong and Rebecca McElfresh will show the film Trails of Hope and Terror by Miguel de la Torres and will lead a discussion following the film. Bring a brown bag lunch. Drinks will be provided.

Tuesday, Sept 24 at 6:30 - 7:30 pm. Jill Olinger will share her experiences at the border over the last two years. Dessert will be provided.

Serve Dinner at East 10th St – September 15

St. Peter's will be serving the weekly community meal at East 10th Street UMC on Sunday, September 15th. We will need a total of about 8-10 people to help provide and serve this meal. Opportunities include helping to serve or providing food.

Carmel UMC Food Pantry Donations for September

In September we are focusing our collection on jelly and crackers (all varieties). It is helpful to the food pantry if you make your donation in a paper bag or a reusable cloth bag instead of plastic. We will also continue to collect "luxury items" like feminine products (pads, tampons), lotion, toothpaste, and hair conditioner. Also, anyone with garden produce can drop directly at Carmel UMC. Contact Liz Chandler at gentlemomlc@gmail.com for info on dropping directly to the pantry.

Missions Team

Team Leader: Katie Lukes

missionslead@stpeterscarmel.org

Family Promise (FP) Hosting October 20th-27th

Our faith requires us to Risk...Act...Connect!

FP is a not-for-profit organization that helps FAMILIES experiencing homelessness. FP runs two rotations, 14 people each, each week throughout the year. During the day their home base is the FP Day Center. While there, adults get help finding permanent housing, searching for jobs (if they are not already employed) & navigating additional services that are available to them. School age children head off to school/camp from the Day Center. In the evenings, each rotation of guests is welcomed at one of the many congregations in the FP network. St Peter's is one of those congregations. St Peter's typically hosts FP guests four weeks throughout the year. This is where **YOU** come in.

FP provides an opportunity to use your heart and hands to truly make a difference in the lives of people going through an unimaginably difficult time in their lives. You ask...how can I help? Let's count the ways!

During our week of hosting, the following opportunities are available to support this St Peter's ministry & share compassion with our neighbors in need:

- 14 times to drive our guests. (FP van provided)
- 14 meals to host (14 breakfasts, 14 dinners)
- 14 evening hosts (2 each evening)
- 14 overnight hosts (2 each evening...wonderful St Peter's parlor accommodations included)
- Set up of guest rooms on Oct 20th (after the second service)
- · Laundry

Come by the FP table, in fellowship hall, starting Sept 22nd (online sign up will be available at that time, also) to see how you can put your faith into action, to help our neighbors in need. New to FP...we will happily partner you with a veteran volunteer. Please consider this opportunity to risk, act & connect in a new way!

A Family Promise Note of Gratitude & Success

THERE EVERYONE P.S. also at St. Peter's /// Wanted Thank you So Much! Non Wishing of WORDS CONNOT EXPRESS our gratitude for YOUR SUPPORt during OUR difficult time! We moved THR Home you will ALWAYS be Remembered by the Johnes Family!

Kick-off Sunday: September 8th; Programing Begins September 15

Join us on September 8th for our Kick-Off Sunday! It will be a worship service filled with goodness, new life, and sharing. Our children will help lead us in worship as they share their findings from the Summer Parables Program. They have stories and drawings from the whole summer to share! It is also the beginning of our storytelling worship experience. Holly Irwin and Kelly Bradbury will be our fearless leaders. Educators and life-long UCCers, we look forward to hearing their stories on this Kick-Off Sunday.

Education Opportunities During Worship at 8:30 and 11:00a.m.

Worship & Wonder (Pre-K-3rd Grade) Weekly at 8:30 and 11:00a.m.

If you have kids in Pre-K-3rd grade, then Worship & Wonder is for you! This is a time where our kids leave main worship and have time to worship, wonder, and interact with their faith together.

456 (4th-6th Grade) 2nd and 4th Sundays at 8:30 and 11:00a.m.

If you have kids in 4th-6th grade, then 456 is for you! Continuing to form and strengthen friendships, our kids continue to meet during worship on the 2nd and 4th Sundays to talk about what is happening in the world, at home, or at school and how that intersects with what is happening in worship.

Education Hour Opportunities at 10:00a.m.

LAUGH (Pre-K-6th Grade)

If you have kids in Pre-K-6th grade, then LAUGH is for you! This is a time for us to be together, to move around, to learn, to wonder about faith and life. This year we are inviting members from the congregation (YOU) to share their gifts, skills, and passions with our kids. If you have a gift you would like to share like: music, baking, yoga, drawing, acting, life skills etc. please be in touch with St. Peter's Education Team.

New This Year: Youth Lectionary (7th Grade and Up)

By request from our youth, we are offering a Youth Lectionary! If you are in high school and interested in talking about scripture, then this is for you! We'll meet in the Youth Room. We'll look into the Psalms and even practice writing our own Psalms throughout the fall.

Lectionary Class

If you love to dive deep into scripture and how it intersects with our lives then Lectionary might be for you. This fall we will meet in the Parlor and learn more about the Psalms.

If you are interested and passionate about taking the art of listening and sacred conversation to all aspects of life, including politics, then Politics and the Purple Church might be for you! (See next page)

Education Team

Team Leader: Lori Radford

educationlead@stpeterscarmel.org

Politics In a Purple Church: Coming to Education Hour This Fall

10-11 am, September 8-November 24 ... except September 29th (brunch) and November 3rd (History Sunday)

Following the popularity of last year's "Politics in a Purple Church" education hour programming, we are excited to announce its return for the fall of 2019. The overall goals will be the same, but will primarily focus on local candidates and issues facing voters in the 2019 elections.

A series of guest speakers and open discussion will provide a safe place to dialogue about issues in a manner appropriate to the church's goal of reconciliation in the community. We will address topics near and dear to some members of the congregation and also challenge people to engage in dialogues with viewpoints that may be less common in our community. In doing so, we hope relationships grow with a recognition that true diversity strengthens our relationship(s) with God.

A wide net was cast to get a representation of candidates from all political persuasions and many of the municipalities represented at St. Peter's. Unexpectedly, we will also have the opportunity to engage in interfaith dialogue, with at least one atheist and one Jewish candidate joining us for dialogue.

Date	Speaker	
September 8	Ali Brown, Democratic candidate for Indianapolis City-Council Council	
September 15	TBD	
September 22	Keith Potts, Democratic candidate for Indianapolis City- Council Council	
October 6	Jeff Worrell, President and Republican-incumbent seeking re- election to the Carmel City Council	
October 13	Miles Nelson, Democratic candidate for Carmel City Council	
October 20	Adam Kaps, Democratic candidate for Fishers City Council	
October 27	James Brainard, Republican-incumbent seeking re-election as Mayor of Carmel	
November 10	TBD	
November 17	TBD	
November 24	TBD	

Subject to adjustment, the current slate of speakers is:

Education Team

Team Leader: Lori Radford

educationlead@stpeterscarmel.org

Youth Group

We're so excited for Youth Group to kick-off for our program year! Your youth group leaders have met and planned a fabulous year for you all. We will continue with meeting twice a month. One meeting will be more conversation based and the other more activity based. For our discussion this year, Netflix will be our helper! *One Day at a Time*, is a show on Netflix that deals with the daily struggles of life, being human, and being part of a community. Activities will vary from bowling, to group building games, to lockins and much more! Check out our Fall Schedule below!

September 15	12:30-2:00	One Day at a Time
October 4&5		Camp-out at the Atkinson's
October 20	12:30-2:00	Activity/Family Promise set up
November 3	12:30-2:00	Activity
November 17	12:30-2:00	One Day at a Time
December 1	12:30-2:00	Activity
December TBD		Christmas in Cincinnati
December 27 & 28	5:00pm-8:30am	Lock-In

Join us for a Camp out at Brian and Jennifer Atkinson's!

We will gather at the Atkinson's at 5:00pm on Friday October 4th. We'll have pizza, play games, have a campfire and s'mores, and sleep outside in tents! Saturday morning we'll eat breakfast, pack up the tents, and then go canoeing on the White River! We'll make lunch, play games, and enjoy the outdoors. Pick up will be at 2:00pm Saturday, October 5th. Please RSVP on Realm if you are planning on attending so we can have enough life jackets for everyone! If you have any questions, please email Becca at <u>becca@stpeterscarmel.org</u>

Communication: Remind App

Remind App is a tool we will use this year to communicate with the youth group and parents as well. This is an app used in many school systems as a way to remind students about upcoming events, assignments etc. We're hopeful this tool will allow for quicker and more accessible communication for everyone.

Women and the Word

Beginning on Thursday, September 5th, Women and the Word will be delving into the DVD series Living the Questions. Our first series will be Uppity Women from the Bible. There's no homework or reading ahead needed, so please feel welcome to come whenever you can! We meet every Thursday from 9:30-11:30 in the Parlor.

Young Adult Group

This ministry has been so much fun and we're excited for another year ahead of learning more about each other, having fun, learning some really helpful and life-altering trivia, and simply being together. Age is not a factor! If you are young at heart (or in numbers) you are invited! We gather every 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month at Books & Brews in Carmel at 7:00pm. We look forward to seeing you there!

Spiritual Life Team

Team Leader: Chrissy Searcy

spirituallifelead@stpeterscarmel.org

New to St. Peter's? Connections Group to Start October 6th

A new Connections group will begin meeting on Sunday, October 6th. "Connections" is a place to learn more about St. Peter's: how it's organized, what it offers. For those who are ready to affirm participation with St. Peter's officially, it's a way of getting oriented to the workings of our congregation and, especially, for learning where and how you might want to get engaged. For others who are considering affirming participation, it's an opportunity to ask questions and discern in community if this is the right place for you. Above all, it's a place to make friends, an experience to share where you are on your spiritual journey. Co-led by Chrissy Searcy, Kyle Kroehler and Jon Kroehler, the group meets at 9:45_{A.M.} in the parlor for a total of four sessions. Subsequent meetings have been proposed for October 13th, October 20th and October27th, but these dates are flexible, and the group will confirm workable dates once together. Those who wish to formally affirm participation with St. Peter's will do so following the completion of these classes. You can sign up in Fellowship Hall or by contacting the office at office@stpeterscarmel.org. Questions can be directed to Kyle Kroehler at <u>Kyle@Kroehlers.com</u>

St. Peter's Men's Retreat

The Men's Retreat will take place September 20th to 21st at Camp Palawopec, near Nashville Indiana and Brown County State Park. Come join in togetherness by spending time with friends, family and the spirit which binds us. Take a walk alongside God through fellowship in nature. Anyone is welcome to join this retreat. If you feel you wish to attend, you are welcome regardless of gender or gender identity. Any questions contact Bob Werner, (317) 709-6596, bob.werner@yahoo.com. Sign upon Realm or in Fellowship Hall. Cost is \$45.

Group Study on the Clobber Passages with Sam Locke

Back by popular demand! Sam Locke will again be offering a weeknight series examining the "Clobber passages," the scriptures most often used to condemn the LGBTQ community.

Join in the discussion to learn more about the theological grounding for being open and affirming or to hone language helpful in discussing the topic with other Christians.

Two books will be used as the main resources for the study, though specific readings are not required in advance for participation. They are: *Unclobber* by Colby Martin and *God and the Gay Christian* by Matthew Vines.

The study will be held on four Tuesday evenings, from 6:30-8, as follows:

October 29	Introduction, Genesis (Sodom and Gomorroah)
November 5	Leviticus (abominations)
November 12	Romans (natural relations)
November 19	Corinthians & Timothy

Hospitality Team

Team Leader: Julia Stolle

hospitalitylead@stpeterscarmel.org

Dine with Nine

It is time to sign up for Fall Dine with Nine Groups – these groups will run late September through early December. If you have never participated, haven't for a long time, or join every round, we urge you to join us – you meet new people, forge deeper bonds with others, and eat great food! The signup sheet is posted in Fellowship Hall, or you can contact office@stpeterscarmel.org. Questions? Please contact Ann-Marie Rohe at <u>amrohe@sbcglobal.net</u>.

Jesus ate with people all of the time. So should we. One St. Peter's person recently remarked, "We're joining another Dine with Nine because it's a great way for us to connect with people that we don't know." Here's to all the joy that will come from these groups. Sign up today!

Preschool Team

Team Leader: Tammy Drummond

preschoolteam@stpeterscarmel.org

Welcome Back

The preschool is now fully staffed with wonderful teachers. School begins on Sept. 3rd. The preschool would like to thank the church volunteers for all their hard work in getting the playground ready for our students.

The preschool director, Lori Jannsen, along with some of the teachers, freshened up some of the classrooms and painted rooms 3 4, and 7. Thank you so much to them. Pictures are attached, but please stop by and see them in person when you are at church.

Preschool is looking for a few toy donations: Fisher Price barns, Pirate ship w/play figures & small car tracks. If you have any of these that you are willing to part with, please leave them labeled in the church office.

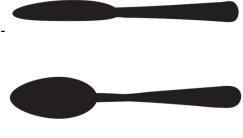
Thank you for supporting this important ministry.



Room 3

Room 4

Room 7



Active Shooter Training for Faith Organizations

Jennifer Atkinson, Vice President

Julia Stlle, Hospitality Team Leader

Two of your St. Peter's leaders attended Active Shooter Training for Faith Organizations on August 25 along with many other faith groups.

Right now – can you identify the address of St. Peter's? I failed this test. All of us should know the address, the location of all fire extinguishers, and the location of all exits.¹ Julia Stolle (Hospitality Lead) and I learned these rules at the Active Shooter Training we attended in late August. The training was presented by the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, the FBI, and various other related law enforcement organizations. We were in awe of all the faith groups who attended. We saw Buddhist monks in red robes, nuns in full habit, Sikh men wearing turbans, and many other faiths represented. We were surrounded by safety officers from various organizations.

According to FBI Supervising Agent Brian Monahan, there has been an uptick in threats against houses of worship. Their hypothesis is that houses of worship have weekly gatherings of large groups of people and generally houses of worship welcome strangers. People who want to wreak havoc can leverage this. Agent Monahan mentioned the vandalism committed at Congregation Shaarey Tefilla last summer; apparently the people who committed the crime also had homemade bombs; instead of detonating bombs, they used homemade napalm to burn the grounds. This summer, the FBI arrested two brothers in Fishers for manufacturing semi-automatic weapons with the intent to provide them to domestic terrorists. We can we do? The best advice from the IMPD and the FBI for an active shooter situation is:

AVOID – know all the exits to a building; if one doesn't exist, improvise to get out DENY – deny the shooter access: lock or barricade the door, turn the lights off, remain out of sight DEFEND – be aggressive and committed to your actions

The IMPD and FBI have joint task force focusing on active shooter prevention. From 2000 to 2017, active shooter incidents occurred at houses of worship in 4% of the cases. The largest category, commerce locations, represent 42% of the incidents. IMPD Task Force officer Matthew Stevenson said that most of the time, the active shooter will post or brag to friends about a personal grievance, recent inappropriate acquisition of multiple weapons, recent and inappropriate escalation of target practice, and recent and inappropriate interest in explosions and firearms. If you become aware of potential situation, contact Ryan Yarrell, Region Manager for MovementForward at 317-939-6700 or ryan.yarrell@movementforward.org.

Julia and I were grateful to have this opportunity to help raise awareness of this issue and increase safety for our congregation.

¹ 3106 E Carmel Dr, Carmel, 46033; 4 exits (front door, accessible door, choir door, labyrinth door); 6 fire extinguishers (main hall, preschool hall, near the accessible door, near the music room, kitchen, and Fellowship Hall closet)

St. Peter's Emergency Procedures have been updated and shared with all staff and lay leaders. Copies are posted in Fellowship Hall, the Kitchen, and in the Church Office.

Building & Grounds Team

Team Leader: Craig Penquite

buildinggroundslead@stpeterscarmel.org

Our "Landscape-Lift"

Over the past few months we hope you have noticed a significant face-lift to our landscape surrounding the church. Katy Palmer led a lean team of volunteers in a planting/work day back in June. We thank all of you that showed up that day to help with the weeding and planting!

Our volunteer team was supported by the brut of three wonderful employees of Providence Outdoors, who the church contracts for lawn service and snow removal. We would like to thank Providence Outdoors for not only physically supporting our efforts, but also for providing us numerous plants at a significantly discounted price. Providence has been our outdoor maintenance partner over the past 5 years



and we are thankful for their excellent service! Should you need landscaping services, please consider contacting them at www.providenceoutdoor.com and let them know you are part of St. Peters UCC.



Fall Work Day: October 5th, 8:30am-12:30pm

We need your help even if only for an hour! Bring the kids and put them to work too, or let them play on the playground! We will have a variety of small jobs around the inside and outside of the church, and all skill levels will be helpful. Our congregation depends heavily on volunteers to help maintain our building and grounds. Please sign-up in Fellowship Hall or on Realm. Contact Craig Penquite (buildinggroundslead@stpeterscarmel.org) or Katy Palmer (groundslead@stpeterscarmel.org) with questions.

Reflections on General Synod 32

Self-Care at Synod By Shannon Abbott

Throughout the Gospels, we find Jesus often surrounded by crowds, and when he is finished speaking or healing or feeding the crowds, he takes time to walk away and find solitude to rest and pray and restore. For the past two years, I have looked forward to General Synod as a place where I am able to learn more about the work of the wider church, and also to visit with friends, many of whom I only see once every two years. I have joked that Synod is my church nerd "mom vacation." However, I also recognize that there's a lot of important work being done by those who do not have the title of "visitor." Regardless of attending status, or whether you're an introvert or an extrovert, there are times throughout Synod (and throughout life) when being among the crowds or going non-stop for 16 hours per day can be overwhelming. During such times, we can take a lesson from Jesus, get away from the crowd, and have a moment of rest.

I was grateful for the opportunity this year to be a part of a Wellness team that offered a place of rest and moments of restoration throughout General Synod. Near the big Convention Hall and the Exhibition



Hall we created a Self-Care Suite. In the large room we provided a variety of scheduled wellness opportunities such as Yoga, Reiki, Meditation, and QiGong. As I led a Mindful Movement practice, I echoed the theme of light from General Synod as we meditated on the words, "I am light. You are light. They are light. We are light. All are light." Just off from the large gathering room in the Self-Care Suite, there was also a quiet room with dimmed lights, comfortable seating, salt lamps, weighted blanket and other blankets, prayer beads, and other restorative aids used by many Synod attendees for quiet or even for a mid-day nap to restore for the remainder of the day. Prayer shawls were also provided by the host

conference of Wisconsin, and they were received and worn with gratitude by many Synod attendees.

One of the most meaningful moments in my participation with this Self-Care Suite was during Synod registration. We decided to hold spontaneous Wellness Flashmobs where we would spontaneously

break into a wellness activity in front of the registration desk. This was designed as an advertisement to encourage attendees to participate in other Wellness activities or to otherwise use the Self-Care Suite throughout Synod. As I led a small group in the Breath of Joy, a woman came to join us, and afterwards she asked me about what we were doing. I explained that this breathing practice is designed to release stress and to fill our bodies, minds, and spirits with joy. She shared with me that her spouse had just died two weeks prior and she had decided to come to General Synod for community. In the midst of her grief, this woman came to find joy. I have led the Breath of Joy



so many times that I had begun to take it for granted. In helping to develop the Self-Care Suite, I expected it to be a place for others to go and restore. What I did not expect was for this flash mob "advertisement" to be transforming to both me and to another attendee. What I learned from this moment is that Self-Care and Wellness do not have to be complicated or even take a long time. The important part is to be open to transformation, because every moment can be a transforming moment.

Community Happenings

Special Invitation to Faith Communities



The Actors Theatre of Indiana

WHEN:

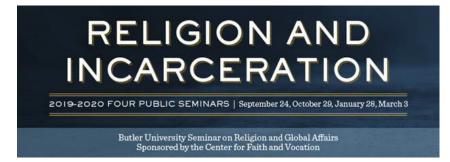
Sunday, October 27th - Matinee Show @ 2 p.m.

WHERE:

The Studio Theater at the Center for the Performing Arts 4 Center Green, Carmel

TICKETS:

Call the box office at 317-843-3800 or visit thecenterpresents.org Use promo code *Alabama20* and your ticket will be \$20 for this performance



The Butler University Center for Faith and Vocation would like to invite you to a four-part series of free and public lectures that are part of the Butler Seminar on Religion and Global Affairs, this year focusing on the theme **"Religion and Incarceration"** Attached is a full brochure that shows the specifics of each event, including brief bios of keynote speakers and respondents. All of this information can also be found on our website ButlerArtsCenter.org

The basic details are as follows:

Incarceration, Christianity, and Black Bodies

Tuesday, September 24, 2019 - 7:00 pm in the Shelton Auditorium on South Campus, But ler University

Why are black Americans disproportionately incarcerated in America? In this session, we explore the historical, social, cultural, and religious roots of this injustice through the lens of black theology and with reference to the resources of the black church. The keynote speaker will be Rev. Dr. Kelly Brown Douglas, author of "Stand your Ground: Black Bodies and the Justice of God."

Notes from the Church Office

Laurie Hesselink, Office Administrator

office@stpeterscarmel.org

Office Hours & Staff Schedules

Office staffing is Monday thru Friday 8:30-2:30. Please do not hesitate to contact our pastors.

Lori Bievenour, Senior Pastor

lori@stpeterscarmel.org, 317.846.6882 x222 (Friday Sabbath/day off)

Becca Lockwood, Associate Pastor for Missions & Education

becca@stpeterscarmel.org, 317.846.6882, x223 (Friday Sabbath/day off)

Laurie Hesselink, Office Administrator

office@stpeterscarmel.org, 317-846-6882

Newsletter Articles

Articles for the September newsletter should be sent to office@stpeterscarmel.org by September 19.

Pastoral Support Teams

St. Peter's Constitution requires support teams for both of our pastors. Eddie Meyer leads the Senior Pastor Support Team, with team members Sue Nye and Stacy McIntyre. Another team member will be added in December. The Associate Pastor Support Team is led by Elizabeth Roe, and includes Jaesoo Kim, Nan Bucksten, and Eric Smith.

Weekly Emails

Community prayers and announcements are emailed weekly. Notify the church office if you would like to receive these communications.

Altar Flower Donations

Sign up in Fellowship Hall or contact the church office to request floral arrangements for Sunday worship services. *(\$50 donation requested.)* Make checks payable to St. Peter's UCC, "altar flowers" in the memo line. When signing up in Fellowship Hall, please be sure to include your name. If you would prefer to not share your name with the congregation, please sign up by contacting the church office.

Donating Stock or Mutual Fund Shares at St. Peter's

Thank you for generously supporting the mission of St. Peter's United Church of Christ! Donating stock or mutual fund shares to the church is a wonderful way to experience both the joy of giving AND significant tax advantages. The tax advantages may include:

- * NO CAPITAL GAINS TAX payable either by you or by the church
- * NO GIFT OR ESTATE TAX because SPUCC is a charitable organization
- * AN INCOME TAX DEDUCTION based on the present value of the gift

You may find numerous examples of just how powerful this method of giving is by searching online for "donating appreciated stock tax benefits".

An important determination in deciding how to best gift your shares is whether they have increased or decreased in value. If your shares have increased in value they should be "donated" to the church, NOT "redeemed" or "sold" or "cashed-in". If your shares have decreased in value, it's better to sell the shares first and then give the proceeds to the church by personal or brokerage firm check so you may deduct the loss on your taxes.

St Peter's has an account with Merrill Lynch Wealth Management who will help facilitate you in the gifting process. For more information, including our Merrill Lynch account number (not provided here for security reasons), please contact Jenny Terry Financial Secretary (financialsecretary@stpeterscarmel.org), Cindy Whitaker Financial Secretary-Elect (financialsecretaryelect@stpeterscarmel.org), or Seth Kreigh, Generosity Team Leader (generositylead@stpeterscarmel.org).

THANK YOU for your interest in supporting St. Peter's in this way!

St. Peter's Staff

Lori Bievenour Senior Pastor lori@stpeterscarmel.org

Becca Lockwood Associate Pastor of Missions & Education becca@stpeterscarmel.org

Sam Locke Ministry Intern ministryintern@stpeterscarmel.org

> Laurie Hesselink Office Administrator office@stpeterscarmel.org

Lori Jannsen Preschool Director preschooldirector@stpeterscarmel.org

Cheryl Keckler Director of Music musicdirector@stpeterscarmel.org

> Adeline Yoder Organist

St. Peter's United Church of Christ

3106 E Carmel Drive Carmel, Indiana 46033



Phone: 317-846-6882 Fax: 317-844-0984 Preschool: 317-846-6860 http://www.stpeterscarmel.org E-mail: office@stpeterscarmel.org #carmelucc #findingspirit

Mission Statement of St. Peter's United Church of Christ

St. Peter's is a welcoming community, sharing God's love with our world and finding the Spirit in Life.

Covenant of Welcome

"Welcome" to everybody who has faith or seeks it, who lives in hope or who needs it.. "Welcome" to all who rejoice and are strong, or who mourn and are weary. "Welcome" to those who know Christ, and to those who long for an introduction.

We believe God's grace is extended to all. To anyone who has felt unwelcome or has experienced rejection elsewhere, we say, "All are welcome here."

We acknowledge our diversities and we welcome, respect and support people of every race, ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, citizenship status, political affiliation, age, marital status and physical and mental ability. We are a community where all are equal, all are loved and all are respected for who and what they are, and what they can become.

We acknowledge that our fears and ignorance sometimes hinder us. We challenge one another to follow the teachings of Jesus, who denied no one and welcomed all. We strive to live our faith by supporting inclusive eness and justice for all humanity, and we invite all who gather here to participate in our ministries of service, word and sacrament.

