



TIDINGS

December 2020

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS AT MT. CARMEL

It's an exciting time for our family at Mt. Carmel. Even though we can't worship together in the building, a lot is happening to make our Advent and Christmas season as meaningful as possible. Here's a list of dates and possibilities for involvement!

Nov. 29, Dec. 2, 9, 16 and 23—Advent Wreath lighting

Four families have volunteered to do the lighting of the Advent candle to share during worship. Thanks to the Labandz family, the Carolan-Kutzer family, Linda and Doug Jones and Karen Moeller for lighting candles. Look for Pr. Christine's article inside for information and tips for making an Advent wreath for your own home.

Dec. 2, 9, 16, and 23—Wednesday Advent Worship

We are planning evening vesper service using Holden Evening Prayer. It will be recorded and posted at 6:30 p.m. each Wednesday during Advent.

Dec. 24—Christmas Eve Worship

Our Christmas Eve worship service will be posted on line on the 24th to be used as you wish.

Dec. 27—Christmas Around The World

This online service will consist of carols from various lands and the stories around them.

There are plans for decorating, homebound and JOY members visits, and maybe more, so stay tuned

MT. CARMEL FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

This is the first call for those who might be interested in applying for a post-secondary scholarship provided through the Mt. Carmel Foundation. Please contact Karen Moeller at 612-619-3743 if you are interested in applying. You will be provided with the necessary information in order to complete your application. All applications must be completed and received no later than Feb. 28, 2021. If you know of someone who might be interested in applying, please pass along this announcement to them. Applicants must be a member of Mt. Carmel.

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OFFERING OPPORTUNITIES

Please continue to support our congregation with your faithful financial contributions to Mt. Carmel as you are able. There are several ways to give:

- Online by credit card or bank account. Visit mountcarmelmpls.org/give for online giving opportunities.
- Mail or drop off your check to the church office.

Your generous support for Mt. Carmel and our ministry is truly appreciated.



MT. CARMEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

We are a faith community participating in the life of God, both as sheer gift to us and as a calling to the neighborhoods of Northeast Minneapolis. We are a multigenerational community that proudly celebrates our history while joining together with younger generations to follow where God is leading. We build our community through faith practices like prayer, dwelling in the Word and hospitality.

1701 St. Anthony Pkwy NE
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612-781-2796
Fax: 612-781-1621

Office hours
By appointment

Interim Pastor

Christine Wenzel, ext. 103
pastor@mountcarmelmpls.org

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Tidings

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Mt. Carmel Child Care

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www.mtcarmel.net

**The mission of Mt. Carmel
Lutheran Church and its members
is to learn, live and share God's
Word.**

Ministry Affiliates: Minneapolis Area Synod/ELCA; Northeast Senior Services, Inc.; Little Kitchen Food Shelf; The Sheridan Story; Eastside Meals on Wheels; Plymouth Christian Youth Center; Mission Northeast and Casa de Oracion a las Naciones.

The Mt. Carmel facility is shared with the following community groups: Scout Troop 132, Venture Crew, Cub Scouts, Girl Scouts and Alcoholics Anonymous.

We are an ELCA congregation. All are welcome. Learn more about the ELCA at www.elca.org/About.



PASTOR'S PEN



We are right in the middle of the time of year, I like to call, "Hallowthankmas." As soon as the back-to-school items are cleared from the shelves, the costumes and candy for Halloween appear. And then, the day after Halloween, the shelves are loaded with Thanksgiving decor. And over the past few years, Christmas decorations appear even before Thanksgiving happens. These three holidays all seem to blend together into what I now call Hallowthankmas.

This year has been a year like no other with the coronavirus exploding around us, especially this fall. Our neighbors had to be creative in handing out candy safely, if children even came to their houses. Now, COVID-19 is so bad, our governor has advised that no one gather with anyone outside of their own household for Thanksgiving. We can only imagine what Christmas will look like.

But before we get to Christmas, the church takes four weeks to prepare for the Christ-child coming. We call these 4 weeks leading up to Christmas "Advent." While our culture gets so busy, at this time, planning, baking, buying and decorating, Advent invites us into a period of waiting. It actually teaches us the art of waiting. Advent is one time in the year when the church says, "Waiting may be difficult, but we have to wait, so let's wait together."

This year, the Worship and Music Committee is inviting each household to make an Advent wreath (see picture) to help us watch and wait for the coming of the Christ child. Since many of us are staying in our homes, this can be a wonderful activity for families of many, or a family of one.

Making the wreath

When making an Advent wreath, you may consider using only natural materials from God's creation. Wreaths can be made of holly, laurel, pine, and other green shrubs. Artificial greenery is available at dollar stores if you do not have access to fresh greenery.

A wreath is usually circular shape. The circular shape of the wreath is a symbol of eternal life.

Candles. Four candles represent the four weeks of Advent leading up to

Pastor's Pen, continued on 3

MT. CARMEL CHILD CARE

Mt. Carmel Child Care went through a quarantine due to a positive COVID test in the center. The childcare center has had a COVID emergency plan in place since the spring and all our teachers are trained in what we would do in this event. Childcare centers in the state follow the same guidelines and exclusions for COVID as the public schools. We follow what is called “the decision tree” put together by the Minnesota Department of Health and the Minnesota Department of Education for when to close and for how long. Our center was closed for 14 days and safely opened on Nov. 23.

In that time the center purchased a fogger machine and safe disinfectant. We worked closely with the church staff and COVID-19 Task Force with coordinating cleaning and reopening the childcare. We would like to give a huge thank you to Steve Panning and Dylan Evans for taking on the task of disinfecting our center spaces as well as any other spaces the teachers use.

The childcare center was lucky enough to receive a Public Health Grant from Minnesota Department of Human Services. In receiving this grant, we were able to pay our teachers as well as give families a tuition break during the two week quarantine.

Thank you all for your continued support of Mt. Carmel Childcare!

—Brenda Wetzel, director, Mt. Carmel Child Care

Pastor's Pen, continued from 2

Christmas. Each week, we invite you to light a candle and say a prayer centered around the themes for each candle.

- The **first** week of Advent, you will light one candle. This candle represents, “Hope.”
- The **second** week, you will light two candles. The second candle represents, “Love.”
- The **third** week you will light three candles. The third candle represents, “Joy.”
- The **fourth** week you will light all four candles. The fourth candle represents, “Peace.”

There is no one prescribed color for the candles. Four natural colored candles are always appropriate and symbolize the Light for which we wait. As the days get shorter, in the darkest time of the year, we wait with longing for the slow return of light. Four blue candles match the blue used in the church for the season of Advent—a color representing hope. In the darkness of winter, in times when things look bleak, we know the Christ-child, is coming into being.

The Worship and Music Committee is asking you to send a picture of your wreath to the church office. We would like to share your pictures on Facebook.

May God bring you hope, love, joy and peace during this time of Hallowthankmas!

Pr. Christine

GIFTS RECEIVED

MT. CARMEL
FOUNDATION

In memory of Isabel Hansen:
Myrna Flatland

**In memory of Alton Peterson
(cousin):** Myrna Flatland

**In memory of Ardith &
Harold (parents):** Myrna
Flatland

SAVE THE DATE!

Mt. Carmel's Annual
Congregation Meeting will
be held after worship on
Sunday, Jan. 31. The meeting
will be virtual via Zoom with
an option to join the meeting
using your phone. More
information will be shared in
the January Tidings.

FAREWELL & GODSPEED

Martha Hoppe, who has
retired from the University of
MN Bookstore and in Dec is
moving to Lincoln, NE, to be
closer to family and friends

MEETING ONLINE

These groups are meeting online:

Reflect Group—Sundays at 11 a.m. (Contact Nick Ralston at faithformation@mountcarmelmpls.org)

Good Fruits Bible Study—Tuesdays at 2:30 p.m. (Contact Leona Olson at onondave@yahoo.com)

Men's Bible Study—Wednesdays at 6:45 a.m. (Contact Ralph Matthes at marinosdelimpls@gmail.com)

KEEP US INFORMED

Did you know that because of privacy laws, hospitals and nursing homes do not call us to report if a parishioner has been admitted, or if a person's condition has worsened? That means we rely on family members and friends to keep us informed. Please call the church office, 612-781-2796, if you or someone you know of is hospitalized.

WANTED: ADULTS LOOKING TO CONNECT WITH YOUTH

We are looking for a number of adults—both men and women—to connect with a younger member of Mt. Carmel (6th-12th grade). Especially in this time of pandemic and distance community, creating relationships between our youth and faithful, authentic adults is so important. While this program is still in its planning phase, we are looking for Mt. Carmel members over 25 who are willing to be partnered with a Mt. Carmel youth through at least June 2021. Right now, that relationship building will be created through phone calls, emails and possibly video chats. And don't forget prayer! In the future, we will also look at in-person activities.

If you have questions or want to participate, Jenni Lathrop at jennifer.lathrop@gmail.com.

COUNCIL HIGHLIGHTS

Council met Tuesday, Nov. 10

- The council welcomed and made introductions with our new interim pastor, Christine Wenzel.
- The church building is closed until further notice, including the childcare, due to a confirmed case of COVID-19.
- The nominating committee (Karen Matthes, Lory Dubbels and Nancy Nordeen) is in the process of recruiting people for council membership. We need to fill three seats.
- A continuing resolution was approved to allow for a virtual format for our congregational annual meeting. This will be known as continuing resolution #22. The annual meeting will be held online the last Sunday in January 2021.
- The council reviewed a first draft of a proposed 2021 budget and will continue working on it for further discussion at our December meeting.
- Treasurer's Report highlights: United Faith giving is up for the month but overall, the faith commitment is down YTD. Income total YTD is up because of the PPP loan. Expenses are down.
- Pastor Christine shared what she has been doing and what she plans to do during her first days and weeks at Mt. Carmel. Getting to know the staff, council, members and overall operations with lots of Zoom meetings and phone calls.

—Karen Matthes



HAPPY BIRTHDAY BAGS

The Girl Scout troop gathered outside to pack “Happy Birthday Bags” for the Little Kitchen Food Shelf. The Birthday Bags will provide customers of the food shelf with cake mix, frosting, paper plates and napkins in a festive party bag. Special thanks to Myrna Flatland for coordinating donation submission.

CALL FOR DEVOTIONAL WRITERS

Wait! Don’t stop reading! Instead, think for a moment about sharing your insights. We are looking for members who would like to share their thoughts on scripture and faith with our community. We’re not looking for “professional writers” or “paid theologians.” We’re looking for your meaningful stories, thoughts and even questions. Why is a Bible verse important to you? When did your faith see you through a challenging time? What are your own questions about scripture and faith?

All ages are invited to share a devotion with a faith community excited to hear your own words. We’ll walk you through the process. Email the office if you have questions or if you would like to write.

FORGET-ME-NOT

Birthday greetings to each of the members listed below who will reach or surpass the 80th milestone in this month. We pray that God bless you on your special day and in the year to come.

Dec. 8—Dick Anderson

Dec. 23—Gloria Anderson,
Wilma Anderson

Dec. 25—Carrol Rignell

It is the policy of Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church to not publish the phone numbers and addresses of members. If you wish to call or send a card to these individuals, please refer to your church directory or call the office.

PRAYER CHAIN

To to lift up a prayer concern for the prayer chain, please contact Leona Olson at 612-859-7075.

TIDINGS DEADLINE

Dec. 15, 10 p.m.

Submit articles to jenni@jennilathrop.com. Issues are delivered the first week of the month.

YOU ARE NEEDED AT MT. CARMEL

In January, the Mt. Carmel congregation council will have open seats to fill and we are looking for members who would like an opportunity to actively engage and use your gifts of leadership for God's work at Mt. Carmel. Volunteering your time to serve on council is a generous way to serve our church community.

The Mt. Carmel council is made up of volunteers elected to serve as leaders of the congregation. Members serve a three-year term and attend one meeting on the second Tuesday of every month. Meetings are held via Zoom so you can attend from anywhere!!

Please connect with any of us on the nominating committee for more information.

- Karen Matthes, kmatthes@gmail.com, 612-716-7395
- Lory Dubbels, Dubbels2234@q.com, 612/788-7785
- Nancy Bjorn Nordeen, nancy.bjorn.nordeen@gmail.com, 612-770-8214

JOIN US FOR GOOD FRUITS

Good Fruits, a small Bible study group, continues to meet weekly on Tuesday afternoons at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom.

We plan to spend our sessions in December using an Advent theme study. Anybody is welcome to join us. We had the privilege a few weeks ago to have Pastor Christine join us. As I told her in our invitation to her, we choose a self-directed study. As we end one series, we decide as a group what to do next. We use a variety of resources including Gather magazine or select a book of the Bible and work through it. Thank goodness for Google for some extra resources as needed.

Before the pandemic, we would meet at Silverwood park each Tuesday at 2:30. There, you can bring your own beverage or purchase a beverage or snack at the Silverwood snack counter. Last spring we started using a Zoom connection. We meet for an hour, there is no long term commitment, no book to purchase (we make the assumption that you have access to a Bible) and no limit if you want to attend just once, or only when your schedule allows.

If you'd like more information or the Zoom connection please contact Leona Olson at onondave@yahoo.com. If you'd like to be on an email list to keep updated on a weekly basis, let Leona know that as well.

COVID-19 TASK FORCE UPDATE

What a couple of weeks it's been on the COVID-19 front. The task force took the step to close the church building due to a close contact case within the child care. The child care's own guidance demanded that they close for two weeks, so in order to help preserve the safety of their space, the church was closed as well.

Then came the new COVID-19 restrictions put in place by the state. While the state guidance says that churches can remain open, it also asks people to not have in-person meetings or social gatherings—certainly a conflicting message. So, we're in a position where we have to determine which route is best for Mt. Carmel: do everything we can to protect the health and safety of all of our members or open up so that we can socialize and gather with our church family.

We've chosen safety, and keeping the building closed to gatherings until the numbers come back down and the state loosens restrictions. We do this because ultimately, we want the opportunity to see all of you next year when we are able to gather again.

And next year is looking realistic with the news of the multiple vaccine trials that are producing great results. Having the vaccine available really will let us return to "normal."

I know these announcements are particularly disappointing, and maybe it even feels unfair that the state is telling us not to gather even in our own homes, especially at this time as we're looking forward to Thanksgiving and Christmas. But that's the nature of this virus and the pandemic it has caused: it isn't fair. It spreads through social contact in activities that are social in nature: at meals and bars, and in family gatherings, or funerals or wedding receptions. And clearly, the reason the numbers are rising again—beyond levels we saw in March and April—is because people have been trying to return to normal social activities, mainly because keeping this distance and seeing each other only via Zoom or other electronic means is just not the same.

Let's face it: most of us probably just want a hug from someone outside of their house or who they see on Sundays at church. I get it. I see my own mom once a week at most, and only outside, when she comes to pick up some groceries I've bought for her and my dad. We have worn masks every time we've seen each other since April. And we've allowed ourselves a hug twice. In those seven months, I learned my job was being outsourced, and did the search and found a new job. But it was a hard five weeks of searching and waiting, and nothing in those times replaces a mother's love.

I can't even imagine what some of you are feeling, especially if you live alone and rely on our time together on Sundays as a social outlet. All I can do is sympathize and offer hope that there is an end in sight now. And I wish there was something we could do as a church to make it safe to worship "normally" right now. But as long as the fact remains that worshipping together in one space is not safe for even some of us, we just can't risk the health and safety of anyone who should spend time in our building.

So please remember that the church building is closed because of the risk involved to our members, staff and visitors. But also remember that while the building is closed, the church isn't. Our building isn't the church—we are the church. So, call each other, text each other, keep up on each other's lives and look forward to that day when you'll see them in person again.

Paul Lathrop

WHERE CAN I FIND...?

During this unusual time, our communications team is working hard to keep you updated and connected.

Website

One of the best ways to find information is on the church website at www.mtcarmel.net.

Find wind worship videos and documents, congregational mailings and other information on the NEWS page. Visit the news page directly at mountcarmelmpls.org/news.

Facebook

Worship is live on Sunday mornings through Facebook live. Also find our daily devotions, videos with Pastor John and event information.

You do not need to have a Facebook account to view our videos and posts, simply visit www.facebook.com/MountCarmelMpls on any computer or mobile device.

STAYING UP-TO-DATE

In this time of physical distancing, stay up to date with Mt. Carmel and our community through our website. Visit www.mountcarmelmpls.org/news to download weekly announcements, view past worship services and find information on special events and learning opportunities. Make sure to subscribe to The Candle email list as well.

If you find it difficult to access our information online, contact the office to be added to our weekly postal mailing list. Each week you will receive the weekly announcements and the text of the previous Sunday's sermon.

To subscribe to The Candle or have your name added to our postal mailing list, please contact Steve Robertson at 612-655-7594 or office@mountcarmelmpls.org.



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS AT MT. CARMEL

As we approach Christmas this year, it's time to celebrate the holidays in a new way, but some old traditions will shine through as well. Though the church building will be closed, our Advent services will continue in the sanctuary and our participation will be through Facebook Live. While only limited staff and volunteers will be there recording the service, you'll see that the front of our church will be decorated with an Advent theme as we've enjoyed in the past. The outside of our church has been decorated with lights too! Pictured above are Leona Olson and Rich Feist who helped Doug Jones. Many thanks to Rich for coordinating the team, so that anyone who passes the church along St. Anthony Boulevard will see our church as a reminder of the living Christ who came save us on Christmas so long ago.

HAVING A BLUE CHRISTMAS?

A popular Elvis song began with the line “I’ll have a blue Christmas without you.” For many people that may well be the situation this year in particular. Many persons have lost a family member or close friend this year of the pandemic from COVID-19 or other causes, so this will be the first Christmas without someone important in their life. For them, it will be a blue Christmas. Others may be having a blue Christmas due to other sources of grief or loss. Many have lost a job because of the recession our country is facing and have not been able to find new work. Still others—especially the elderly—are feeling isolated because they have not been able to hug their children or grandchildren in many months because of the risk of catching COVID. All of these situations are variations on grief and loss that may lead to feelings of being depressed for the holidays when society tells us this should be the “happiest time of the year.” Persons experiencing loss feel everything but happy.

If you or someone you know is experiencing any of these situations, you may benefit from being connected to the Befriender Ministry at Mt. Carmel. People who have been through the Befriender’s training have received extensive practice in active listening skills. They can be present to allow you to express whatever feelings you are experiencing as you travel through your situation. They aren’t meant to be problem solvers, but they will assure you that God is with you even in the difficult times of your life.

Due to the COVID pandemic most of the contacts with a Befriender would be over the phone or through electronic media like FaceTime or similar approaches. If you would like more information about the Befriender Ministry at Mt. Carmel or if you would like to be connected to a Befriender, please contact the church office or Dave Olson who is the administrator of this ministry. Dave can be reached directly by calling 651-528-7459.

*God’s peace to you,
Dave Olson, Befriender Administrator*

BUILDING CLOSED

Mt. Carmel is currently closed to small group gatherings and meetings until the Minnesota state restrictions are lifted on in-person gatherings. No one is allowed in the building at this time. If you need to be in the building for any church-related business only, you must be masked at all times and limit your time in the building. All staff will be working from home.

If you must enter the building, only use the main entrance at the corner of Ulysses St. and St. Anthony Parkway. All other doors should not be used. This will keep all visitors to the building from entering space maintained by the Child Care Center (child care families only should continue to use the entrance nearest the center).

Find our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan plan online at <https://mountcarmelmpls.org/mt-carmel-covid-19-preparedness-plan/>

WATCH SUNDAY'S WORSHIP ONLINE

Did you miss worship this week or would you like to watch it again? You can watch the recorded videos on our website at mountcarmelmpls.org/category/worship following worship each week. We also post the text to the sermon at mountcarmelmpls.org/pastors-page/sermons (when available).

2020 MT. CARMEL COUNCIL

Tim Quinlan, President
Barb Hollister, Vice President
Karen Matthes, Secretary
Diane Langer, Treasurer
Allison Gurney
Dave Larson
Patrick Lathrop

BATS IN THE BOILER, SQUIRRELS IN THE FIREPLACE

There is always something surprising for Steve Panning to deal with at the church. Earlier this fall, when he started up the boiler for the season, there was a horrible smell in the boiler room. After some quick investigation, Steve determined the odor was coming from the boiler exhaust that goes up the chimney. And the suspicion was vermin in the chimney.

A call to our pest control company and a visit by their specialist revealed the answer: bat droppings piled up in the boiler exhaust pipe! The piles of droppings were removed and we are hoping that with the boiler running for the season, the bats will move elsewhere.

Then there was the Friday afternoon that Steve stopped by the church later in the day after work. As soon as the Child Care teachers saw him, they informed him that there was a squirrel in the Fireside Room. At first, Steve thought they were kidding. But they were not.

When he opened the Fireside Room door, the trespassing critter was hurling itself at the windows trying to get out. As Steve entered the room, it headed back to its point of egress, the fireplace. While the terrified rodent was making several failed attempts to jump back up the chimney, Steve opened the window the squirrel had been trying to jump through. Taking a few steps towards the fireplace was enough to send the miniature beast back to the window. After but one failed leap at the window, the furry-tailed rodent found its opening and made good its escape.

NORTHSIDE JUSTICE FELLOWSHIP

Gethsemane Lutheran Church, our partner congregation through Northside Justice Fellowship, is seeking help in the distribution of food in their neighborhood. Who would like to volunteer to join our friends at Gethsemane in North Minneapolis? If you have questions, contact Pastor Jeff Nehrbass at prjeff@thecamdenpromise.org.

CHURCH ANNUAL REPORTS DUE

It is time for committee chairs and group leaders to begin thinking about your annual report article. Articles are due to the church office by Friday, Jan. 15, although earlier is better. We will be assembling the annual report the following week and making it available to church members. Questions can be directed to Steve Robertson at office@mountcarmelmpls.org or 612-781-2796.

TREASURER REPORT

YTD Nov. 1, 2020

Mt. Carmel financials are still in a positive mode due to the Federal Paycheck Protection (PPP) loan we received for \$37,440 that we expect to be forgiven. Though year to date contributions are significantly below what was pledged by \$14,802.20, giving increased in October, and our expenses continue to come in below budget. Please prayerfully consider bringing your giving up to date by mailing in your donation, or consider using simply giving.

Our Actual Income-Expense Ratio YTD as of October 31, 2020 was \$15,061.03. Last year at this time we were (\$3,940.09).

Income/ to expense

October Actual	October Budget	YTD Actual	YTD Budget
\$2,358.69	(\$550.34)	\$15,061.03	(\$9,853.33)

—Diane Davis Langer, Mt. Carmel Church treasurer

A WORD OF THANKS

Thank you to all who included me in thoughts and prayer during my recent illness. I'm happy to report that I was diagnosed with Lyme's Disease, which can be treated with antibiotics. I am back to normal activity and am very grateful for your support to Dave and I during this time.

Leona Olson

THANK YOU

Thank you to several members who came out in the burst of good fall weather clean up around the church property. Those helping were Bob and Barb Hollister, Wayne and Kathy Halverson, and Rich Feist. Also, thanks to our Scout Troop 132 and leaders Steve Panning and Jim Evans who organized a clean-up day around the church property.



Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church

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Mt. Carmel Lutheran Church

During this season of COVID-19, the church building is closed. But our faith community is always open.

Interim Pastor

Christine Wenzel

Office hours

By appointment

Sunday worship

10 a.m.—Facebook Live at
facebook.com/MountCarmelMpls

Mt. Carmel Child Care

Brenda Wetzel, Director
612-781-2798

**Mission: Learn, live
and share God's Word**



WORSHIP WITH US ONLINE

Join the Mt. Carmel faith community for worship on Facebook Live, Sunday mornings, 10 a.m.

To access the worship online, go to the Mt. Carmel Facebook video page at facebook.com/pg/MountCarmelMpls/live anytime after worship is scheduled to begin. Select the video with the red "LIVE" tag to start watching. *You do not have to have a Facebook account to watch the worship service.* Videos are available to watch at any time after the live event.

For more on worshipping with us using Facebook Live, visit mountcarmelmpls.org/watching-worship-on-sunday-mornings.



612-781-2796



office@mountcarmelmpls.org



www.mtcarmel.net



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