



# CARMEL BIRTHDAY REFLECTIONS

*Three reflections from long-time Carmel family members help us wrap up our birthday month.*

## **DEBBIE & TED WILBURN** *members since 1978*

Calling Carmel family can be a cliché, but in our case, it isn't. When Debbie and I joined Carmel over 42 years ago we were newly-weds having moved to Charlotte just one year prior. We had no relatives locally, so Carmel became and to this day remains our family. We have made lasting friendships, many of which still exist today.

We have always been part of a discipleship community (Sunday School back in the day) as this is where you get to know people and develop long-term relationships. Our church family has been by our side loving and supporting us in times of celebration, family illnesses, deaths, and just doing life together. We have been blessed to be able to raise our two sons at Carmel from birth to them becoming adults and starting families of their own.

Over the decades we have been privileged to serve with and be ministered to by many Godly men and women who helped mold and shape us into the people we are today. From our first DC taught by Don and Pat Hoover to times spent under the tutelage of Rachel and Percy Craven and Maury Wishnoff to name a few. We have been fortunate to serve under three great pastors: Don, Wayne, and now Alex.



Ted and Debbie joined Carmel  
as newlyweds



Ted and Debbie as new members  
- April 1978



Each one having their own unique style and leadership qualities but each being placed and used by God. What a privilege and blessing!

We have made many memories over the years. A few include dinner on the grounds under the massive shade trees at the Carmel Road campus; widows luncheons and celebrations in the Red House; the journey from the old campus on Carmel Road to our present location including the starts and stops along the way; the Saturday mornings spent praying with brothers and sisters for God's direction in the old barn that sat on the current property; Saturday night worship services; off-campus classes; the antics of Dale Sealy, an unorthodox but effective Man of God!; Joy Proms. The list goes on and on.

As Carmel has invested in us, we have invested in Carmel by serving. Serving in various ministries over the years has brought many blessings and helped us to give back and to grow spiritually.

Wilburn family, 1988 church directory



Ted and Debbie with family



Besty with her family, 1981 church directory



## **BETSY MADDUX**

*member since 1976*

My family came to Carmel in 1976 when my dad was called here as the senior pastor. At that time, Carmel was just a small church on the corner of Carmel Road and Sharon View, but it quickly became my "home away from home".

Besides school, my world revolved around church. Most of my friends went to Carmel and our slogan at the time was "Feels Like Family", which was very appropriate. As a child and a teenager, I grew so much spiritually because I was surrounded by people who "felt like family" that were continually investing into my life. Every Sunday morning, Sunday evening, and Wednesday night, we came to hear great preaching. We also came to sit under the wonderful teaching in our Sunday School classes and discipleship groups.





Besty & Steve Maddox married at Carmel



Maddox family, 1995 church directory



Besty and Steve with grandchildren at Carmel

I was growing by leaps and bounds in my understanding of the Bible and what it meant to “walk the walk” of a Christ follower.

During those years, our Student pastor, Ken Dibble, also had a great impact on us because of his intentionality and relationship with each student he came across. It wasn’t unusual for him to come to school to eat lunch with us, to play a game of pick up basketball with the guys on the courts behind our church, or to invite us over to his house for dinner. He knew us well and because of the relationship we all had with him, he was able to speak into our lives during those critically important teenage years.

Some of my fondest memories growing up at Carmel are of singing in the choir, student retreats to Daytona Beach, GAs and Acteens, Vacation Bible School, picnics and ice cream socials on our beautiful lawn, and overnight “Lock-Ins”. Our church was booming during those years and people were being baptized in great numbers. I remember one revival we had at Carmel that we were encouraged to come to and to bring our friends along with us. We all brought as many people as we could round up and we saw so many of our friends from school come to know the Lord that week. It was an exciting time!

Carmel is where my husband, Steve, accepted Christ and got baptized. It is where I worked in the office during my summers off from college. It is where we got married and had our babies dedicated. Carmel is where my children were rocked in the nursery and sung over since they were 6 weeks old. It is where they went to WEE School and learned that Jesus loved them. Carmel is the Children’s Ministry that took my kids to camp and where I watched them sing in the children’s choirs and learn about missions. It is where they came to know the Lord and were all baptized. It is where my daughter got married and where she dedicated her own babies.



Carmel is also the family that surrounded us with love when we lost three of our parents. It is where their funerals were held. It is where we have been prayed over and surrounded with friendship and encouragement in some of our hardest days. It is hard to measure the impact that Carmel has had on my life. It is truly one of God's greatest gifts to me and to all of us who are a part of it. I am so thankful for a church that is alive and growing. It continues to bring people to Christ. It has never stopped being a light in our community. It still ministers to those near and to those in far away places. It is still a place where the people of God gather to worship and fellowship together and where the love of God can be felt the minute you walk through the doors. 55 years is a big birthday! I am so thankful to be a part of celebrating all the ways God has been so good to us through these years. I pray that our next 55 years will continue to bring glory to Him!

## **PAM HUGHES**

*member since 1997*

Carmel has given me so many wonderful memories over the past 24 years...but most of all the Carmel Family has been PRESENT in my life.

My family has experienced numerous medical emergencies and our friends at Carmel have always shown up, whether it was one of the many times we've been in Charlotte hospitals or even the lengthy time we spent in the hospital at Chapel Hill, we were surrounded by people who loved us and knew how important it was to be PRESENT - close friends, pastors, deacons, colleagues from Carmel Christian School and WEE School, church ball team kids and Sunday School teens.

The current pandemic season made it very difficult to be so alone in the hospital these past couple months. People need their people and we knew ours were "there," albeit remotely, through prayer, texts, and phone calls. It brought to mind many memories of familiar faces showing up in times past and has reaffirmed to me the importance of making a point to be present for people in the future when visitation rules and life in general goes back to some kind of normal.





Greg's August 2020 heart transplant was covered in prayer by the Carmel family

Thank you Carmel for being a PRESENT family.

My favorite happier time of togetherness at Carmel is the Christmas Eve service every year. I love looking down the row and seeing my family—for many years just our own young children but now our grown daughters with their spouses, our grandchildren, and the past few years, my mom.



Pamela and Greg with their adult children and grandkids (who also call Carmel home)

All the busy shopping and decorating is done, the programs I lead completed - it's now just family together, among many other friends' families, and a meaningful time of worship. At the end of the service when we raise our candles and the room is filled with the light of each individual and the collective glow of the entire assembly, it is the time that reminds me of the most important things in life—Jesus, worship, family and friends PRESENT together in my church family.

Happy 55th birthday, Carmel!



Dr. Bouldin

Pastor Alex

Dr. Poplin

As part of our 50th celebration in 2015, we created a series of videos that celebrated each decade of Carmel's history. We also marked the milestone year with a worship service where we all gathered as one outside under a large tent. Pastor Alex was joined by his predecessors - Dr. Don Bouldin and Dr. Wayne Poplin - and collectively they preached from Matthew 28, the Great Commission.

[Click here to enjoy more reflections and explore Carmel's roots!](#)



Carmel is committed to making disciples of those Nearest, our Neighbors and the Nations.

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