



The Spirit of Central

News about the mission of Central Lutheran Church
Downtown Minneapolis

Sunday, March 7, 2010

Welcome!

Inviting people in who are seldom invited elsewhere

Restoration Center marks one year of service and radical hospitality

Central's Restoration Center opened for a three-hour "test run" on March 3, 2009. A year later, it has become the public face of Central to hundreds who come for help week in and week out. It is the latest incarnation of a 90-year legacy of existing for the sake of others here in the heart of downtown Minneapolis.

The Restoration Center—born out of Central's strategic plan—combines previous community ministries, such as the Clothes Closet (in operation since 1967) with new efforts of hospitality, counseling, financial assistance and spiritual formation. And, it does it all from a dedicated space, which is unique among the outreach ministries of downtown Minneapolis congregations.

"Much more happens around the gifts of clothing or food than one might think," said Pastor Kristen Jacobson, who oversees Central's Community Ministries. "What happens when people come is restorative, life-giving and community-building—both for those who receive and those who give."

The Center is named, said Pastor Kristen, "out of the promises" of 1 Peter 5:10-11: "And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, support, strengthen and establish you."

"I believe this promise of restoration is for all of us at Central whether we are a traditional member or a member of the community that surrounds the Restoration Center. God is actively

restoring us as he promises to support, strengthen and establish us for the good of the world," said Pastor Kristen.

In addition to those served (see numbers below), the Restoration Center "community" includes nearly 70 regular volunteers—many of whom are not members of Central.



"There are people of every background, religion and ethnic group," said Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer, Central's community ministries coordinator, who manages the Restoration Center. "But despite its diversity, it is a community that points to Christ; that points to God in all we do. We are living out our callings to love our neighbor and serve Christ."

"Community plus ministry equals the Restoration Center," said Rolf.

"As we celebrate the one-year mark of the Restoration Center, we also celebrate the ongoing legacy at Central of existing for the sake of others," said Senior Pastor Rick Nelson. "This generous giving of ourselves in the name of Christ—that is literally part of Central's DNA—continues to inspire imagination about ways to increase the reach of Christ as we serve our neighbors with dignity, care and respect. It is a great privilege to stand with and for those for whom Christ died and to continue to ask ourselves: what more can we do?"

In the photo: staff and volunteers of The Restoration Center had lunch together on March 4— part of the great fellowship that exists among those involved in the Center.

By the numbers: Restoration Center year one*

(numbers are people!)

2,700

Shoppers in the Clothes Closet

9,000

Guests at the Monday Community Meal

5,700

reception room guests (use phone, computer, read, have coffee, hang out)

2,000

Participants in Monday worship

3,000

People seeking financial resources

2,500

People examined in the Augsburg Central Nursing Center

*Numbers are approximate and obviously involve repeat guests. But Rolf estimates that the Restoration Center welcomes over 200 "unduplicated" people each week.

Our Family Album

SNAPSHOTS OF OUR LIFE TOGETHER IN MISSION

Central Voices

"It all matters. During this time of Lent I am reminded how serious all this is. This business of faith is serious. This business of discipleship is serious. As disciples we are called to think about how we give and how we serve. It matters how we live and serve.

This struggle with what it means to be a disciple is very personal to me now, during this period of discernment called Lent. What does discipleship cost me? What does it cost you? Are we living the same old lives? Can we start anew? Let us name our demons and ask God to free us from them. Let us pick up the cross and carry it."

Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer
Community Ministries
Coordinator

A week in the life . . .

As always Central was, to use a favorite word of founding pastor J. A. O. Stub, "teeming" with activity



In the photos (clockwise from top left): ♦The OWLS took a short trip to the Augustana Apartments for a Lenten service on March 3. ♦Pastor Kristen Jacobson spoke to the Men's Fellowship on March 6. ♦Pastor Mark Peterson facilitated the Lay Visitors training on March 6. ♦The Senior High Youth Group gathered for "movie night" on March 5. ♦The Community Room was packed on February 28 for the second of Pastor Rick's six-week "Table Talk" series.

Daily Bible Readings

Monday, March 8 — Psalm 39; Jeremiah 11:1-17; Romans 2:1-11
Tuesday, March 9 — Psalm 39; Ezekiel 17:1-10; Romans 2:12-16
Wednesday, March 10 — Psalm 39; Numbers 13:17-27; Luke 13:18-21
Thursday, March 11 — Psalm 32; Joshua 4:1-13;
2 Corinthians 4:16—5:5
Friday, March 12 — Psalm 32; Joshua 4:14-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-15
Saturday, March 13 — Psalm 32; Exodus 32:7-14; Luke 15:1-10
Sunday, March 14 — Psalm 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21;
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

Central Lutheran Church

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EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA
WWW.ELCA.ORG

The Spirit is published weekly and distributed at Sunday worship services. It is a companion publication to Central's website and electronic newsletter.
PRODUCED BY THE OFFICE OF COMMUNICATIONS
NEWS@CENTRALMPLS.ORG



Franni Franken to keynote Mother-Daughter-Sister-Friend Breakfast



The wife of Minnesota's junior Senator will be the keynote presenter at the 10th Annual Mother-Daughter-Sister-Friend Breakfast on May 8 at the Golden Valley Country Club. Franni Franken will talk about "the importance of family ties during turmoil and change."

The annual event—which draws hundreds—was started in 2000 by Rebecca Jorgenson Sundquist and was inspired by memories of attending festive Mother's Day gatherings in her hometown of Redwood Falls.

Rebecca says that the event has been a catalyst to bring people together, help to restore relationships and bring about real healing.

The breakfast is sponsored by the Circle of Friends, who note that the word "friend" in the event title can mean "men."

"This is an opportunity for men to bring their mothers, sisters, daughters or friends," said Zee Gregerson, one of the organizers of this year's event. "Many do and we welcome many more."

Franken, by all accounts, has taken to her new role as the spouse of a United States Senator—with the visibility and influence it brings—with ease and determination. The Minneapolis StarTribune has reported that "not since Sheila Wellstone has a congressional spouse from Minnesota gotten as involved in public policy as Franni Franken." Franken has chosen to make domestic violence her signature issue—just like her late friend, Shiela Wellstone.

"She was someone who was once, like me, new in town, but she became a voice," Franken said. "She really understood people and how legislation affects them. She knew what worked and what could work better."

An invitation to the 10th Annual Mother-Daughter-Sister-Friend Breakfast will be mailed to Central homes in early April. Tickets will also be available for purchase through Central's website.



Help bid farewell to Malcolm Williams

Next Sunday we will bid farewell and godspeed to Malcolm Williams, who has been a security guard at Central since 2006. He has resigned his position to become the first director of security at Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis.

Central members and friends are asked to bring a pie to share, in honor of Malcolm, to be served in Fellowship Hall between services and in South Commons following the 11:00 a.m. service. Next Sunday is also "Celebrate Your Birthday Sunday." Coffee hour treats will additionally be provided by members with birthdays in March or April.

Please Support the Sunday School Hygiene Kit Project

On March 14, Sunday School children and families will assemble more hygiene kits for the Augsburg Central Nursing Center. Financial donations are needed and will be accepted today in Fellowship Hall or the Church Office. The goal of \$1,500 has almost been reached. Please help put the campaign over the top today! *Your generosity makes this ongoing project possible! Thank you!*



Contribute to Central's Easter Garden

A tradition for many years has been to offer members and friends the opportunity to honor or remember loved ones by purchasing plants to be used as Easter decorations in the Sanctuary and then delivery to those who are homebound.

Purchase your plant today in Fellowship Hall or the Library Hallway. Cost: \$10 per plant. (Purchases also available Sunday March 14 and 21.)

Be an advocate to end homelessness!

Central is deeply involved in a county-wide effort to end homelessness. Central's Community Ministries Outreach Team and Heading Home Central invite and encourage you to participate in three upcoming opportunities to join the effort:

"Taking the Fear Out of Talking with Your Elected Official"

*A workshop offered by Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness
Sunday, March 14 — 12:30 to 2:30 p.m.
Plymouth Congregational Church*

Are you motivated to end homelessness, but feel uncomfortable talking face-to-face with your elected officials about it? This workshop will give you confidence in approaching candidates and elected officials. The workshop will be facilitated by the Rev. Nancy Maeker, executive director of A Minnesota Without Poverty. The workshop is free of charge, but reservations are requested by contacting Nan Neville at 612-581-4554 or janeville@comcast.net.

Day on the Hill

*Annual Citizen Lobbying Opportunity at the State Capitol
Sponsored by the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition — Thursday, March 25*

The day provides an opportunity to meet other people from your legislative district, learn tools for advocacy and talk face-to-face with your legislators—a day to use our civic voices to advocate for the most vulnerable in our society."

More information is available at www.jrlc.org/day-on-the-hill.

Contact Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer if you want to be part of Central's delegation to Day on the Hill 2010.

Project Homeless Connect

*Monday, March 29
Minneapolis Convention Center*

Project Homeless Connect is a massive, semi-annual effort by Hennepin County that puts hundreds of service providers in direct contact with homeless persons and others in need. Central typically sends a large delegation of volunteers—who must receive training. There are five upcoming training sessions: March 15 (Brooklyn Center), March 16 (Minneapolis), March 17 (Minneapolis), March 22 (Minneapolis) and March 23 (Minnetonka). *For times and locations visit www.homelessconnect.org/volunteer.*

Please contact Rolf Lowenberg-DeBoer if you have any questions about these opportunities at rlowenberg-deboer@centralmpls.org or 612-767-9214.

Events and Opportunities



Coffee Hour Hosts Today:
The OWLS
*(Central's Older, Wiser
Lutheran Seniors)*

— Sunday Schedule —

7:30 a.m. - Upper Room Open for Prayer (206)
8:00 a.m. - Early Bird Coffee (South Commons)
8:30 a.m. - Holy Communion (Sanctuary)
9:30 a.m. - Fellowship Time (Fellowship Hall)
9:45 a.m. - Education Hour
10:30 a.m. - Fellowship Time (South Commons)
11:00 a.m. - Holy Communion (Sanctuary)
12:00 Noon - Fellowship Time (South Commons)

Today



Images for Lent, Holy Week and Easter—*South Commons Gallery*

The Fine Art Ministry Team presents an exhibit from Central's permanent collection—images for Lent, Holy Week and Easter—now hanging in the South Commons Gallery.

"Table Talk: Conversations Around Faith and Life"

Week three of a six-week series

Join Pastor Rick Nelson for fun, lively and thought-provoking conversation about some of the real issues of faith intersecting with life. Each of the weekly segments begins with a brief, engaging video featuring pastor/teacher Rob Bell (author of *The Velvet Elvis*). The series runs the six Sundays in Lent, concluding on Palm Sunday. Last year over 100 persons participated in a similar series. **9:45 to 10:45 in the Community Room.**

Presiding Bishop to Host Town Hall Forum Online



The Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA),

will field questions on a variety of topics from members of the denomination at an online "Town Hall Forum" Sunday, March 7. The hour-long forum will begin at 5 p.m. Eastern Time (4 p.m. Central Time). The forum will be webcast live from Chicago, where Hanson will be joined by an audience of ELCA members. Online viewers can submit their questions. For more information and to watch the forum, log onto www.elca.org/townhall.

This Week

Central Meetings and Rehearsals:

Financial Sub-Committee

Monday, 7:00 a.m. (Fireside Lounge)

Youth Ministry Team

Monday, 6:15 p.m. (offsite)

Staff Meeting

Tuesday, 10:15 a.m. (Room 123)

Grace Circle

Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. (Room 123)

Heritage Ministry Team

Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. (Heritage Room)

Bell Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, 6:00 p.m. (Choir Room)

"Free" Bible Study (*Senior High Youth*)

Wednesday, 6:00 p.m. (Youth Room)

Health Ministry Team

Wednesday, 6:00 p.m. (Fireside Lounge)

Männerchor Rehearsal

Wednesday, 6:30 p.m. (Community Room)

Central Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, 7:15 p.m. (Choir Room)

Fiscal and Property Committee

Thursday, March 11, 7:00 a.m. (Fireside)

"Dining in the Kingdom of God" Thursday Lenten Series Continues March 11



Christianity is, at its heart, a meal fellowship. At the center of our life together is a table. Each Thursday in Lent we'll gather, eat a

little together—either soup at lunch or appetizers in the evening—and explore images of "dining" in the Bible, where meals mean life and salvation. There will also be a half-hour worship experience in the sanctuary.

NOONTIME: 11:30 - "EXPLORING THE IMAGES;"

12:00 - RESPONSIVE PRAYER; 12:30 - SOUP LUNCH

EVENING: 6:00 - APPETIZERS; 6:20 - "EXPLORING THE IMAGES;" 7:00 - PRAYERS AROUND THE CROSS

Twin Cities Sustainable Communities Conference, March 12-13

Central, and its Congregations Caring for Creation Ministry Team (C3), is proud to host this annual conference, sponsored by the Alliance for Sustainability: **Friday, 12:00 - 5:00 p.m. — Third Annual Local Government Workshop.** This gathering will bring together 400 local government staff and elected officials, citizens and business leaders to learn about model policies and ordinances they can adopt to save money, spur economic development and enhance livability. **Saturday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. — Fifth Annual Neighborhood Sustainability Conference.** The conference will be attended by over 500 volunteers from neighborhoods, congregations and schools. *Detailed information and conference pre-registration at www.afors.org.*

Next Sunday

"Table Talk: Conversations Around Faith and Life"

See announcement under "Today."

Looking Ahead

"Families Commune: Breaking Bread Together," Thursday, March 18

Children and adults interested in taking their first Communion or "refreshing your call to the table" are invited to a one-evening class on Thursday, March 18, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. in Room 123. Bring a loaf of bread. We will be making sandwiches out of the bread provided as we explore the theological importance of breaking bread together and sharing the body of Christ. Sign up on the "Family Board" near Fellowship Hall. Our First Communion Festival will be Holy Thursday, April 1 during the evening Lenten service. Contact Greer Cherney with questions.

Bach Birthday Celebration Concert venues to include Central, Saturday, March 20

The Bach Society of Minnesota, The Schubert Club and Minnesota Public Radio are celebrating the 325th birthday of Johann Sebastian Bach with a series of events March 16 to 22—including five organ concerts at downtown Minneapolis churches on Saturday, March 20. Central will host the final concert of the day, from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., which will feature organists Carolyn Diamond, Roger Ruckert and Aaron David Miller. The Saturday concerts are open to the public free of charge. More information at www.mpr.org/bachbirthday.



OWLS to see "Footloose" at Chanhassen Dinner Theater, April 17 — tickets on sale today

Join Central's Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors (OWLS) for a trip to the famed Chanhassen Dinner Theater for lunch and a performance of the smash Broadway hit musical "Footloose." The motorcoach departs Central at 10:30 a.m.; lunch is served at 11:30, followed by the musical at 1:00 p.m.; returning to Central by 5:00. Cost: \$45. Sign up today in Fellowship Hall or the Church Office.