



the Spirit weekly

News about the mission of Central Lutheran Church
Downtown Minneapolis

*December 20, 2009 — Fourth Sunday in Advent
Celebrating Katharina Von Bora Luther, renewer of the church*

Remarkable hospitality; remarkable volunteers

More than 13,000 welcomed for public events in November and December

The Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra with Osmo Vänskä as soloist—1,100 guests. The 30th Annual Augsburg College Advent Vespers—10,000 guests, plus over 350 performers. The Minnesota Orchestra and Minnesota Chorale—1,100 guests. Add to that the funeral for a prominent Minnesota rock musician (which drew 600 persons to Central) and you have the kind of hospitality opportunity that most churches can only dream about.

Here at Central, it's no dream. It's the reality and legacy of a congregation, blessed with a magnificent worship space that it has been sharing with the wider church and community for decades. And this season, it

all went off without a hitch—thanks to careful planning by members of Central's staff and thanks to a cadre of trained and steadfast volunteers, who literally become "the face" of Central—and the face of a grand legacy—as they welcome guests through our doors.

"Our volunteers share their gifts of hospitality and help with grace and dedication," said Karen Snyder—a volunteer herself—who coordinates the hospitality volunteers for public events at Central. "Our hosts are always friendly and helpful."

Sometimes, Karen points out, the volunteers also have to be flexible. This was the case on Friday, December 11 when, Karen reports, the volunteers "performed beyond the call of duty." Central learned late that afternoon that the Minnesota Orchestra was not able to provide ushers for the ticketed event of the evening: a performance of Handel's Messiah by the Orchestra and the Minnesota Chorale. It was not until 6:00 p.m., when Central's hospitality hosts arrived, that they learned they would have to put on different hats and take on the roles of ticket checkers and help guests

find their ticketed seats. But it worked, said Karen, and it worked flawlessly. "They were absolutely remarkable."

This is the very kind of hospitality that members of Central have been extending for decades, reminds Senior Pastor Rick Nelson.

"What an incredible privilege it is to gather under the cross in the heart of the city! And what a remarkable opportunity and responsibility to be the heart of Christ in the city. We have been entrusted with so much, and have been blessed to be a blessing," said Pastor Rick.

"Especially in this season of Christmastide when literally thousands cross this threshold, let us not forget this privilege, responsibility, and the great pleasure we have of serving together in this place and time. And as the Apostle Paul reminded us in Galatians 6:9, "Let us not grow weary of doing good..."

Congregation President Bill Masche said that "the impact the gift of our facility—generously shared—on our community and the greater church is profound."

"Whether the scene is 200 Restoration Center guests dining in Fellowship Hall—the cross glowing in the stained glass—or 1200 guests immersed in the sound of a great orchestra and soloist—the cross towering over the sanctuary—all have found a place at Central. We are immensely blessed with our campus and the opportunity it affords us to pursue our mission. We welcome all to experience Central, whether it be our food, music or worship and once our guest, I believe few come away unchanged in some way."

A roster of the hospitality volunteers for Augsburg Advent Vespers and the Minnesota Orchestra concert are on page 3.

In the Photo: The Minnesota Orchestra and the Minnesota Chorale performed Handel's Messiah at Central on December 11. PHOTO BY JOE BJORDAL



Our Family Album:

SNAPSHOTS OF OUR LIFE TOGETHER IN MISSION

Annual Christmas Tea promotes holiday cheer; raises money for kitchen



Central's Annual Christmas Tea drew more than 200 persons to Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 12 for the festive event—a true “high tea.” Members of the Christmas Tea Committee hand-prepared all the food. In addition to food and fellowship, a Christmas “Marketplace” offered the wares and services of several vendors, including artist Adnan Shati, pictured here drawing Deb Wee.

Photos by Joe Bjordal



Sheep take the stage for Christmas pageant

Central's Sunday School children took the stage in the Community Room last Sunday to perform “Wee Like Sheep Have Gone Astray,” the annual Christmas Pageant. The program was written by Pastor Kristen Jacobson, who is seen here giving last-minute

instructions—with the help of a friend—while Sunday School teachers Sara Stensaas and Jane Eshleman look on.

Holy-Dazzle!

We invite you to enjoy the dazzle of God's amazing grace and love-come-down as we walk together toward a meaningful Christmas!

Central Lutheran Church
12th Street at Third Avenue
(Just east of the Convention Center)

centralmpls.org
612-870-4416

All are Welcome!

Take a bookmark. Invite a friend!

Please take note of the bookmarks located in the pew racks today. Patterned after Central's Advent and Christmas advertising, the bookmark contains information about Central's Christmas worship services. It is intended to be yet another reminder and invitation to Central members to commemorate Christmas here. It is also intended to be a tool for inviting others—something you can hand to someone you care about, encouraging them to join you—perhaps even sit with you in worship during these holy days.

If each of us reaches just one person, it will be a bold indication that we have caught God's gracious and invitational nature—sending a clear message that we really want others to join us!

Bookmarks are available in quantity from the Church Office.

Pastor Kristin

Worship Task Force wants your input!

The task force, established by the Council in October, is evaluating the nature of an additional worship service that will serve both the vision and mission of Central and desires of the community. The task force is now seeking input from members and friends of Central about opinions, needs and hopes for such a worship service.

A five-question survey has been prepared and may be taken one of two ways: online, through a link on the front page of Central's website (www.centralmpls.org) or by completing a printed copy, which is available at the Church Office. Survey responses will be received until January 17.

On Sunday, January 10, the task force will host "listening sessions" following both morning worship services.

Cross raising draws media attention

A chapter in the life of Central Lutheran Church, Minneapolis—lived out largely in the public eye and one that has provided the opportunity to tell the story of Central's urban mission far and wide—came to a successful conclusion on Sunday, December 13. Braving arctic-cold weather, members of the congregation gathered outdoors at noon and sang "Lift High the Cross" as Central's historic spire cross—damaged in a rare downtown tornado last summer—was raised by a 200-foot crane and permanently remounted to the church's spire.

The tornado touched down near Central on the afternoon of August 19 as the Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America was meeting at the Minneapolis Convention Center just across the street. Two outdoor, tented hospitality areas—set up to serve Assembly voting members and guests—were completely destroyed. The storm snapped the center supporting mast of the spire, leaving the 14-foot tall, 900-pound cross dangling upside down. It was safely removed the following day.



The storm caused \$298,000 in damage to Central's campus. Events scheduled inside Central's buildings went on as planned.

The "cross raising" received the same high level of media attention as did the tornado. Sunday's ceremony was covered by four local television stations, the Minneapolis StarTribune and the Associated Press.

In the photo: Fiscal and property committee member Franklin Dietrich, congregation president Bill Masche, Senior Pastor Rick Nelson and Associate Pastor Kristen Jacobson stood next to the restored spire cross before it was raised and reattached to the spire on Sunday, December 13.

Council hears about "success and recognition;" plan to deal with budget deficit

Under a regular agenda item titled "success and recognition," the Congregation Council, at its December 15 meeting, heard reports about recent public events at Central, the Christmas Tea, the recent Council Forum, the Bach Cantata Sunday, the Men's Breakfast and the Sunday School Christmas Pageant.

The Council also heard about a plan to deal with a budget deficit that is current \$105,236—due mostly to parking revenue, which is much lower than anticipated. The Fiscal and Property Committee has formed a task force to develop a revised financial plan for the remainder of the fiscal year, which ends June 30, 2010. The task force will strive to have recommendations developed for presentation to the Council in January.

The Council also heard ministry reports from Central Lutheran Church Women, the Heritage Ministry Team, the GLBT Ministry Team and the Congregations Caring for Creation Ministry Team.

The Council will call for a special congregational meeting on January 24 to approve the final distribution of Forward in Faith Funds and to approve the sale of a condominium bequeathed to Central. Formal notice of the meeting will be forthcoming.

Thanks to our December hospitality volunteers!

Augsburg Advent Vespers, December 4 and 5:

Julie and Gary Anderson
Shanti Austvold
Judy Berge
Birgit Carlson
Margie Carlson
Alice Dahl
Eunice and Franklin Dietrich
Cheryl Erickson
Darlene Erickson
Kathy and Ron Fiscus
Shirley Flachman
Lloyd Grinde
John and Joan Hagman
Jim Hart
Ruth Hoff
Randy Holm
Myron Just
Janet Krofta
Jean Matheson
Karla and Charles Moline
Trudy Ness
Jerry and Muriel Olsen
Arlis Prescott
Red and Mary Rehwaldt
Kathy Rovenko
Lois Steer and Larry Peterson
Jackie and Lloyd Thorsen
Joan Van Wirt
Bob and Phyllis Whitney
Marie Wiegert
Lois Wolff
Bob Ylvisaker

Handel's Messiah, December 11:

Chuck and Joyce Anderson
Julie and Gary Anderson
Margie Carlson
Shirley and Jim Dahl
Roberta Groening and Heruy Mesfen, and friend, Becky
Ruth Hoff
Christy James
Jean Matheson
Ken and Lynn Olson
Jim Sample
Bryan Sletten
Joan Van Wirt
Bob and Phyllis Whitney

Karen Snyder and the hospitality volunteers serve as part of the WelcomeLife Ministry Team, headed by Karl Starr and supervised by Pastor D. Foy Christopherson.

Events & Opportunities

Today

“Old Testament/New Year: a guide to reading the Old Testament at the beginning of the year (Advent)”
—A Lifelong Learning Forum

9:45 A.M. IN THE COMMUNITY ROOM

For many Christians making sense of the Old Testament can be a challenge; this is all the more true in Advent, when the Old Testament comes closest to the New promise. Join the Rev. Karl Jacobson, assistant professor of religion at Augsburg College, in an exploration of the Old Testament through the readings assigned for the Sundays of Advent, and learn together as New Testament people reading the Old Testament promise at the start of a new year.

“The Healing Ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Zimbabwe”

—A Global Mission Forum

9:45 A.M. IN ROOM 123

Scott Lien, director of operations for Global Health Ministries, has recently visited Zimbabwe and was present when a sea container of medical supplies and equipment arrived from the Fridley-based organization. He will describe the rejoicing that accompanied the opening of that container and how the supplies were distributed. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in Zimbabwe operates four hospitals, two homebound care programs, a training school for nurses and care for 8,000 orphans.

This Week

Christmas at Central

Christmas Eve — December 24

4:00 p.m. — Twilight Service of Blessing
10:30 p.m. — Candlelight Holy Communion

Christmas Day — December 25

10:00 a.m. — Holy Communion

Daily Bible Readings

Monday, December 21 — Psalm 63;

2 Kings 23:15-25; Revelation 11:1-14

Tuesday, December 22 — Psalm 63;

1 Samuel 17:55-18:5; Revelation 11:15-19

Wednesday, December 23 — Psalm 63;

2 Samuel 2:1-7; John 16:25-33

Thursday, December 24 — Psalm 96;

Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

Friday, December 25 — Psalm 97;

Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:8-20

Saturday, December 26 — Psalm 148;

2 Chronicles 24:17-24; Acts 6:1-7; 7:51-60

Sunday, December 27 — 1 Samuel 2:18-20,
26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3:12-17;

Luke 2:41-52

Next Sunday

There will be one worship service
on December 27 at 10:00 a.m.

**A SERVICE OF CAROLS
AND HOLY COMMUNION**

Looking Ahead

**Men’s Fellowship to hear about
“coast to coast bike adventure,”
Saturday, January 9**

Central’s Men’s Fellowship will hear from Central member George Carlson on Saturday, January 9 (a one-time change from the typical “first Saturday of the month” meeting date), about bicycle touring and his remarkable coast-to-coast bicycle trip last year—from Oregon to New Hampshire. The gathering starts with breakfast at 8:00 a.m. and concludes by 9:30 a.m. There is a \$6.00 charge for breakfast. No reservations necessary.

**Habitat for Humanity work day,
Saturday, January 9**

Central Lutheran Church will again partner with St. Mark’s Episcopal Cathedral for Habitat for Humanity on Saturday, January 9. If you would like to sign up to volunteer on that day, please contact Karen Knox at (612)767-9211; kknnox@centralmpls.org or Lynn Gilligan at (612)331-4866; lynngilligan@comcast.net. Be part of helping another family find the warmth, safety, and stability of a home!

**Join the OWLS for a joint concert of
the Minnesota Orchestra and St. Paul
Chamber Orchestra, January 24**

Join Central’s OWLS (Older Wiser Lutheran Seniors) at Bethel College on Sunday, January 24 for a rare joint concert by the Minnesota Orchestra and the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra. The orchestras will perform Stravinsky’s ballet score, “The Rite of Spring.” Cost: \$17; includes concert ticket and small lunch to be served immediately after the 11:00 a.m. service. Motorcoach departs Central at 1:15 p.m. for the 2:00 concert. Sign up in Fellowship Hall on January 3, 10 and 17.



For Sale Today Only

Laser-cut ornament of Central are for sale today in Fellowship Hall following the 8:30 service and at the Church Office following the 11:00 service. Cost: \$20. Proceeds benefit the kitchen fund.



Calendar

SUNDAY COFFEE AND FELLOWSHIP:

8:00AM - SOUTH COMMONS

9:30AM - FELLOWSHIP HALL

Hosted today by the Men’s Fellowship Group

10:30AM - SOUTH COMMONS

12:00 NOON - SOUTH COMMONS

Sunday, December 20 – 4 Advent

7:30am - Upper Room Open for Prayer (206)

8:30am - Holy Communion (Sanctuary)

9:30am - Augsburg Nursing Center Opens

9:45am - Sunday School Christmas Celebration
(Room 222)

9:45am - Confirmation Class (228)

9:45am - Lifelong Learning Forum
(Community Room)

9:45am - Global Mission Forum (123)

11:00am - Holy Communion (Sanctuary)

1:00pm - Salt of the Earth Storytellers (Fireside)

Monday, December 21

10:00am - Brass Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

10:30am - Worship (Community Room)

11:00am - Clothes Closet (Restoration Center)

11:30am - Christmas Meal (Fellowship Hall)

6:00pm - Health Ministry Team (Fireside)

Tuesday, December 22

10:15am - Staff Meeting (Room 123)

Wednesday, December 23

8:00am - Worship Environment & Art
(Sanctuary)

10:00am - Clothes Closet (Restoration Center)

6:00pm - “Free” Bible Study – Jr & Sr High
(Youth Room)

6:00pm - Bell Choir Rehearsal (Sanctuary)

7:15pm - Central Choir Rehearsal (Choir Room)

Thursday, December 24

Christmas Eve

4:00pm - Twilight Service of Blessing
(Sanctuary)

10:30pm - Candlelight Holy Communion
(Sanctuary)

Friday, December 25

Christmas Day

10:00am - Holy Communion
(Sanctuary)

Saturday, December 26

No Events Scheduled

Sunday, December 27

7:30am - Upper Room Open for Prayer (206)

10:00am - Holy Communion (Sanctuary)

The Spirit, a companion publication to Central’s website and electronic newsletter, is produced by the Office of Communications.

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