

# Centering

NEWS OF CENTRAL LUTHERAN | MINNEAPOLIS



Central Lutheran  
MINNEAPOLIS



## Worship

Where we welcome, support and lead so that all people of God may be inspired, refreshed and sent out together in mission.

WINTER 2019

# Worship and Music

By Deacon Mark Sedio



*Hello, darkness, my old friend.  
I've come to talk with you again.  
Because a vision softly creeping  
left its seeds while I was sleeping  
and the vision that was planted in my brain  
still remains  
within the sounds of silence.*

## Holiday Worship

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 21

5:00 p.m. - Saturday Evening Worship

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

8:30 a.m. - Holy Communion

10:30 a.m. - Holy Communion

### CHRISTMAS EVE

#### TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24

3:00 p.m. - Twilight Service of Blessing

10:30 p.m. - Candlelight Holy Communion

### CHRISTMAS DAY

#### WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 25

10:00 a.m. - Contemplative Christmas Day Holy Communion

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 28

5:00 p.m. - Saturday Evening Worship

### SUNDAY, DECEMBER 29

8:30 a.m. - Holy Communion

10:30 a.m. - Holy Communion



Of all the seasons of the church year, Advent is clearly the one most shrouded in mystery. Here in the northern hemisphere it is a time of growing darkness, a time when lights are hung on homes, on boulevard trees—perhaps an all-too-early anticipation of Christmas but adding a wonderful mysterious feel to our early Advent evening travels to home from work or school, or to choir rehearsal!

I hadn't thought of it before but the first verse of Paul Simon's "Sounds of Silence" (above) kind of nails it—softly creeping, seeds left while sleeping and visions planted in the brain (bringing to mind all those dream sequences in Matthew's Gospel which, on the first Sunday in Advent we embark) and, of course, the silence.

The color of Advent is blue. Think of its many variants: rich royal, tender baby, deep midnight. Blue: the color of hope. It is also the color most often associated with Mary, the Mother of Our Lord, whose "Magnificat" marks the season, extolling God's mercy and calling for justice in our world. (This year's Sunday School program on December 15, will focus on Mary. Make sure you don't miss the 10:30 service that day when, in addition to a meaningful presentation, the Sunday school children will join the Central Choir as we "Climb to the Top of the Highest Mountain.")

Advent is also a time we encounter angels—on the top of Christmas trees as well as in scripture. And to those

they encounter—Joseph in dreams, Mary at home in Nazareth, shepherds on a Bethlehem hillside—these messengers of God bring a strangely assuring word: "Fear not!" Fear not the presence of these holy beings but also of the unknown...the mystery that is coming upon us in the form of an infant no less. The light breaks in and cannot be overcome. We have nothing to fear.

Advent hymnody, too, has an air of mystery. It is here in this season that we sing many songs based on ancient chants. Old sounding melodies that are modal (neither major or minor) melodies that captivate us. "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" is a good example. The tune embraces eight prayers or antiphons that invite the one who is to come into our lives, into the darkness. Wisdom, Dayspring, Lord of Might, Key of David, Branch of Jesse, Ruler of the Nations, Emmanuel. In the refrain at the end of each stanza we are called to overcome our fear, to welcome the stranger, to rejoice in the mystery breaking in on us.

Advent is a time for contemplation. A time when, before our voices swell with the joyous burst of Christmas carols, we may take time to dwell in silence and wait in hope.

So, this Advent be aware of the flavors that surround us in worship. Make room for silence. Come, sit in the sanctuary and simply "be." Embrace the blessed darkness. And wait with pregnant anticipation for the Light of the World.

# The Strategic Plan Task Force is at Work

The Strategic Plan Task Force is at work. The whole team met on November 4, breaking into the four work groups for each of the initiatives. The work groups will develop specific goals based on results from past cottage meetings, the MAP surveys and previous ministry in each area. These goals will go to the congregation council for approval, then we will move forward with the next step in this exciting work.

The four initiatives within this strategic plan process are:

- Culture-Permeability (New Member Welcome and Engagement Initiative)

- Ministry Practice-Connectedness (Member Participation and Mission Clarity Initiative)

- Belonging (Member Relationships and Community Connections Initiative)

- Telling the Story (Internal and External Marketing Initiative)

At the heart of this work is God's call for us to welcome all people, no exceptions. As Hazel Reinhardt noted in the recommendation to the Congregation Council, "considerable ministry and intentional work over the past five years has resulted in higher morale, a deepened sense of hope for the future, positive energy for mission and deepening trust. The results of this ministry and work are apparent in the program life of the congregation, the facility renewal, the expansion of mission, the morale of the staff and the energy of the congregation. Previous survey work and the recent MAP and LSI surveys have benchmarked these changes."

It is a great time to be Central Lutheran. We are not without our bumps and bruises, but we know God continues to bring healing; calls for reconciliation; guides us in the ways of love; and empowers us for new ways to welcome, connect, work for change and tell the story of this wonderful congregation.

## Mission Forward - Thank you

Thank you for your response to the Mission Forward invitation for lives of generosity expressed in your annual financial intention and for the capital appeal. God is abundantly generous in our lives. We are blessed to be a blessing; generosity is truly hard-wired into each of us. We make all these intentions as an act of faith, a response as the followers of Jesus Christ.

*Mission  
Forward*

If you have not yet returned your Mission Forward Response Guide and Card, you can still do that, they are welcome at any time. If you have misplaced your intention packet, please call the church office and we can mail you a new one or even send it out via email. You can also return your financial intentions via email. You can email your plan to Obie Holmen, director of finance, at [rolholmen@centralmpls.org](mailto:rolholmen@centralmpls.org).

## End of Year Giving

As you look toward your end of the year giving, please note that your gifts need to be postmarked by December 31 to be credited for this year's tax purposes. You can also go online to our website and make your gift there. If you are interested in making a stock gift please contact Obie prior to the gift so we can help facilitate the process.



## Save the Date: Annual Meeting

**Sunday, February 9, 11:45 a.m.**

Save Sunday, February 9, for the Annual Meeting. We meet to celebrate mission, hear about how God is at work in and through the people of Central Lutheran Church, adopt the 2020 budget and elect congregational leadership. A light lunch will be served immediately after the 10:30 am worship service. The open budget meeting will be on Sunday, February 2, at 11:45 a.m.



## Restoration Center Annual Christmas Appeal

The Restoration Center has been the joyful recipient of your generosity each Christmas season. Please consider giving to this valuable ministry this year as the days get colder and shorter.



On average, the Free Store serves 350 people each week who need clothes and household items.

The Community Meal has continued to grow this fall as people are both more comfortable in our new building and as folks experience the radical hospitality our volunteers provide.

Emergency Rental Assistance has kept on average 15 families out of homelessness each month of its operation.

If you would like to support this ministry, please designate your gift to the Restoration Center.

## Homeless Memorial March

The Homeless Memorial March is on Thursday, December 19. We will begin at the Hennepin County Government Center Plaza at 5:00 p.m. where you can pick up a sign of someone who has died in the past year who experienced homelessness and/or worked in advocacy to end homelessness. We will march to a

local church where we will gather to tell stories and remember the people we know who have died. We will light candles and hear music and comfort one another. We usually end the night with a great community meal. Please watch the *Spirit* for details.

## DCEH is Now Align!

Rebranding as Align Minneapolis eliminates both real and perceived barriers to our collaborative. It better reflects how we do our work together as we:

- Align congregations across faith towards a common goal.
- Align direct services with the needs of the community.
- Align those who are housed with people who have lived experiences of homelessness.
- Align state, city, and county laws and funding with our values.
- Align our knowledge of



homelessness with facts and experiences.

Align Minneapolis looks forward to continuing our work with Street Voices of Change, our member congregations, community members, and partner organizations towards addressing homelessness both for individuals and systems. There will be no changes in the services or advocacy of Align Minneapolis or our member congregations due to the name change.

Please check our new website, [alignmpls.org](http://alignmpls.org) for updates on the work we are doing.

### Fine Arts Ministry Team

You may start noticing the art coming back onto Central's walls. The Fine Art collection was photographed and wrapped and moved into climate controlled storage in order to get ready for our Building Renewal Project in late summer of 2016. The Fine Arts Ministry Team was reconstituted this fall and they have been so excited to bring the art to its new home, to unwrap it, and to find new places for it all to hang. Keep an eye out for old familiar art and new favorite pieces as they grace our new walls. Also if you or someone you know is an artist, let us know! The Fine Arts Ministry Team is hoping to begin hosting shows again soon.

### Another opportunity for Spiritual Practices

In November, a small group of people began to gather to explore spiritual practices. Growing out of the centering prayer that had been practiced both in the Street Voices of Change group and in the Sunday Listening for God group, there was a request for a daytime opportunity. This group meets on the third Thursday of every month from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Our next gathering time is Thursday, December 19. Please consider joining us. No prior experience necessary.

# Connections

Looking toward Advent and Christmas, opportunities abound for connecting in all kinds of meaningful and wonderful ways. We are busy planning for the quiet contemplation of Advent, the glorious celebration of Christmas and the great revelation of Epiphany. As we approach the darkest days of winter, we remember that a light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.

## Caring Crew

Our Caring Crew, which launched last September, is regularly visiting 48 members from Central who find it difficult to get to church—especially in the wintertime. We regularly hear stories of great conversations and beautiful reunions like the one pictured here. In December, members will deliver poinsettias to many of our members reminding them of their church who loves and cares deeply for them.



## Sunday School

Our Sunday school children are busy memorizing songs to sing for you at their Christmas Program on December 15 during the 10:30 worship service. This year, they will tell Mary's story in a beautiful narrative highlighted by music and prayers. Earlier this fall, the children packed health kits with the help of their shepherds and parents. Packing health kits has become an annual MEA weekend tradition for us. Pictured here are the kids with all the boxes of supplies they put together.

## Youth

In October, our middle school students spent a great weekend together at Camp Wapo. In addition to discovering new things about their Bibles, we played a lot of nine-square and gaga ball where our kids competitive spirits came to life. In January, our families will return to Wapo for Family Camp and in February, our high school students will journey to Amnicon for a quick winter get-a-way.



## Faith Stepping Stones

New, and especially fun this year are our Faith Stepping Stones. We have presented Bibles and explored what it means to be made in the image of God. Next, we will look carefully at Holy Communion and then Holy Baptism. With each Faith Stepping stone, children make or receive a marker to hang on a mobile that reminds them of all the ways God is present in their lives.



## Adult Faith Formation

I am always grateful for the ways in which you practice formation and care with each other. The OWLS continue to meet monthly for field trips and performances. A group just explored SeaLife at the Mall of America. Here they are imagining what 'shark week' must feel like. A Different Kind of Book Club meets monthly throughout the program year to talk about new and relevant writings. Circles, knitters, quilters, mom's groups and young adults bubble up from inside Central to become communities that love and care for each other.

# Adult Faith Formation

## Open to the Mystery of God

Being open is one of the essentials for a life of faith in today's complex world. It is a gift to be open to God and it is a gift to be open to one another. When we are open to God, we become listeners for God's gracious invitations for our lives. When we are open to one another, we become listeners to one another's stories. When we are open to God and to one another, we enter the place of mystery. In that place of mystery, questions shape who we are and invite us to the place of vulnerability. One of the greatest questions that we begin with when we are open to the mystery of God is: who is God? From that

question, other questions open us to the mystery and to lives of faith, love, hope, justice and peace.

For this program year, from September – May, the invitation to be open to the mystery of God will help shape worship, faith formation, community life and generosity. For adult lifelong faith formation, it is an exceptional invitation to help us grow in an awareness of God, one another and our relationships with all our neighbors.

There are many opportunities for adult, lifelong faith formation, here are some of the opportunities as they are shaped by the invitation for us to be open to the mystery of God.

## December

### 1 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Thanksgiving Weekend, Congregational Advent Festival in the Great Room

### 8 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Introduction to the Year of Matthew, Open to the Mystery of God – with Pastor Peter

### 15 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Introduction to the Year of Matthew, Open to the Mystery of God – with Pastor Peter

### 22 – Sunday

No Adult Faith Formation Time – Christmas break

### 29 – Sunday

No Adult Faith Formation Time – Christmas break

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## January

### 5 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Open to the Mystery of God in Worship – with Deacon Mark

### 12 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Open to the Mystery of God in Community – with Pastor Melissa

### 19 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Richard Webb - Open to the mystery of God in diversity. Why does God care about diversity? How do we grow in faith and love through one another's stories?

12:00 p.m. Empowering Conversations (Peace with Justice) Forum with Richard Webb, why should the church care about diversity?

### 26 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Open to the Mystery of God in Generosity – with Pastor Peter

# Adult Faith Formation

## February

### 2 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Open to the Mystery of God in Faith: Enneagram – Understanding Ourselves, One Another and God. Led by Pastor Stephanie

### 9 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Open to the Mystery of God in Faith: Enneagram – Understanding Ourselves, One Another and God. Led by Pastor Stephanie

### 16 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Dr. Mary Lowe, Luther Seminary, Open to the Mystery of God in Women and Justice. Why does God care about women and justice?

12:00 p.m. Empowering Conversations (Peace with Justice) Forum with Dr. Mary Lowe, Luther Seminary. Join this lunch and deep conversation as we ponder God's call for women and justice. Why does God care about gender equality and gender and justice?

### 23 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. Open to the Mystery of God, Prayer, Faith and the Enneagram – Understanding Ourselves, One Another and God. Led by Pastor Peter

## Winter Wednesday Evening Bible Study: The Gospel of Matthew

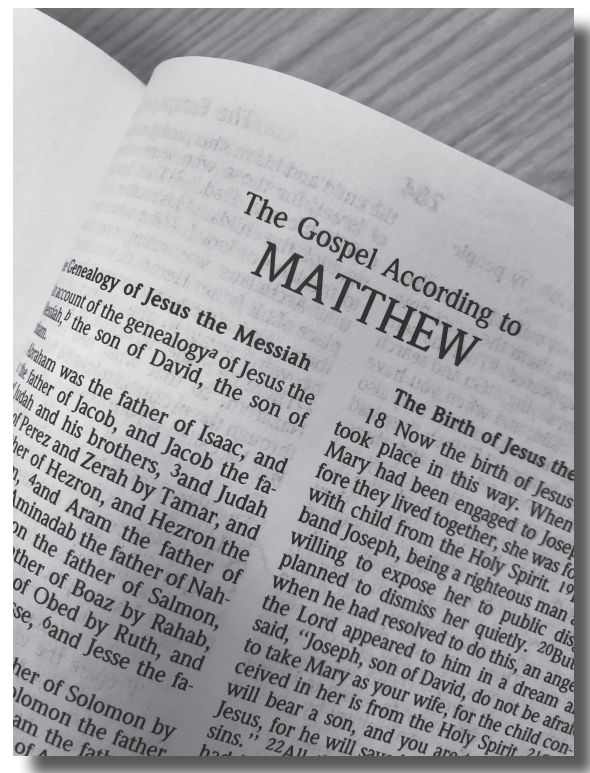
**Begins Wednesday, January 8, 6:00 p.m.**

You are invited to join Pastor Peter for the winter Bible study that begins on Wednesday evening, January 8, at 6:00 p.m. The study is open to all, and no previous Bible study experience is needed. Pastor Peter provides materials for the entire study, so if you need to miss a session or two, it is easy to keep up as you move through the book.

The study time concludes at 7:00 p.m. in time for choir members to get to choir by 7:15 p.m. The study is six weeks long, concluding on February 12.

The Gospel of Matthew is the gospel that guides our worship life for this year. This study of Matthew will be unique. It will look at the overview of the gospel at the first session, but the remaining five sessions will look at the unique features in Matthew's Gospel: this unique Christmas story and how that sets the stage, the sermon on the mount, Jesus as teacher and the great commission.

Plan to attend this winter study. The Bible study material will be available the weekend of January 4/5 and at the first class session. They will also be available on the church's website.





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### Center Our Lives in Faith

This publication follows the way God calls us to center our lives in faith. We center in worship, lifelong faith formation, community and generosity.

Each of these mission areas invites us to ways we personally center as well as how we center as a congregation. By centering, by deep listening to God, by lives shaped by daily prayer and in the ancient ways congregations grow in love and care for all, we will explore the promise of God for all.

### Cover Photo

Our cover photo spotlights our Sunday School Christmas Program featuring children ages three to eleven. Under the direction of Jane Lien and Susan Troselius, our children share the good news of Jesus' birth. *Photo taken by Phil Holst.*



Exploring the promise of God for all



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