

# Centering

NEWS OF CENTRAL LUTHERAN | MINNEAPOLIS



Central Lutheran  
MINNEAPOLIS

## Community

Where we explore the promise of God for all, working towards a transforming, nurturing, life-giving community.

SPRING 2020

# Community

By Pastor Melissa Pohlman



This year we have been open to the mystery of God in our faith formation time. The theme has guided and enriched not only our education, but also has opened us up in the community mission cluster. I was blessed to lead a session on how we are open to the mystery of God in

community in February. Through the good back and forth with you who gathered, my experience of our God who is abundantly filling us with blessing was enlivened. We talked about the challenges our city and nation and world face at this particular moment in history. Sometimes we start listing the hard stuff and it can be overwhelming and leads to despair. But not that morning. We were reminded that while we are called and able to see the world as it is and tell the truth plainly, we are also called into bringing about a world as God sees it and knows is possible. A world where justice and wholeness and peace reign; the Kingdom (or Kin-dom) of God on earth, the Beloved Community (as Dr. King called it). We do that by pouring out of ourselves God's love that has been poured into us by the Holy Spirit at the insistence of Jesus in our baptisms. Whew! Are we tired yet? Central does an amazing job of pouring ourselves out and giving ourselves away for the sake of our neighbor. You will find so many articles and calls for action in this issue of *Centering* that are doing just that. While we do this good work of solidarity with folks and the world that is experiencing challenges, how are we getting filled up again in order to be full enough to spill over and give ourselves away?

For me, it's in the stories. This week one of our folks who has shopped in the Free Store for years popped in to see if he could get a few more good clothing items. He had lost all his things on Christmas when the Drake Hotel burned down. He had been staying there. We got to chat and catch up and I asked, "Have you gotten all the resources that are available to you?" He hadn't known that anything was for him. I took him over to the welcome desk where Joe from Align Minneapolis was handing out gift cards to the survivors. He got a gift card preloaded with money he really needed today. He busted out the biggest smile I have ever seen on his face. He told me I had to tell this story to the whole church. He says, "Thank you, you all are blessing me all the time!"

We had a crew of four men who went to community organizing training in January from Central and Street Voices of Change. We worked on not only knowing justice is needed, but also learning how do we work strategically to win justice for folks who desperately need it? Many of the guys came back from the training with fully formed strategy charts to accomplish their goals and our goals as a group. One of our guys is planning on hosting monthly workshops to teach others about the tools he learned.

It is the new members that keep streaming in because as they tell us, "We loved your welcome statement, and then found that you don't just say it, you live your welcome here."

Every day we are called into this good work. How the fruit of this love is formed and delivered remains a mystery to us until it is dropped into our laps. I am thankful to serve a community that is always open to God's mystery.

## New Campaign

We can do much more in the fight to be sure everyone has a home if we do that work together in collaboration. In that spirit we work with the other congregations in Align Minneapolis to coordinate our advocacy, organizing and goods drive. Our focus in this three-month period is \$500 million for new housing; \$50 million for shelter beds; and \$15 million for shelter services.

Please consider helping us fill the closets in the Free Store with good household items like, pots and pans, dishes, towels and sheets. Think about what you might need if you had nothing and you needed to suddenly outfit an apartment by yourself. What would you need? Do you have any of those items to give away and bring in to the Free Store?





Homeless Day on the Hill is a day of advocacy hosted by Minnesota Coalition for the Homeless (MCH). Together, hundreds of Minnesotans gather and talk with their lawmakers about the need for more safe and affordable housing across the state. You can register online at [www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/advocate/doth2020](http://www.mnhomelesscoalition.org/advocate/doth2020). After you register, MCH will schedule your lawmaker visits. They will lead a training (at 9:00 a.m. on 3/11 at Central Presbyterian

Church) that will prepare you and other community members from your district to have a conversation with your lawmaker. There is typically a hearing around one item on the MCH Legislative Agenda and a press conference. We have a room reserved where advocates network, play games and use social media while waiting for their lawmaker meetings. Central will charter a bus for anyone who would like to meet at church and head over together. Sign up for the bus at the welcome desk on the weekends. We will be led by members of Street Voices of Change on advocating for more shelter funding. If you want to make a difference, this is your event.

## Restart of ERA

Our Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) program through Align Minneapolis has been on hiatus while we hired new staff. We are thrilled to introduce you to Nate Merrill. He is a recent graduate of Macalester College in St. Paul and is excited to serve our community as the ERA Coordinator. ERA is a program that comes alongside people who have a stable income and experienced a crisis and were unable to pay their rent. Our volunteers spend time with each person understanding and documenting their situation in order to send their application on to a team

that decides if we can support each request. Once the person is approved, they work alongside us serving a meal, sorting in the Free Store, or other projects. When they complete their service, a check to cover their overdue rent is sent to their landlord. If you would like to know more about this program that is keeping people out of homelessness and connecting all of us to a wider community, please email or talk to Pastor Melissa or Karen Knox. We are always looking for more intake volunteers.



At the beginning of 2020, Central Lutheran joined Mental Health Connect. Mental Health Connect is a collaborative of faith-based communities, working together to support community-based resources; provide support and education; improve access to mental health services; connect individuals and families with the services they need.

Isha from their staff joins us at the Monday community meal on the 4th Monday of the month to

provide connections to folks who are interested. Our hope is to grow our connections and offerings through this collaboration to folks on Saturdays and Sundays.

In the spirit of collaboration, we are looking for 2-3 people deeply interested in mental health to be our Mental Health Connect Ambassadors. Ambassadors attend monthly meetings to hear what is new in the world of mental health as it relates to faith communities and functions as a link between Mental Health Connect and Central Lutheran. If this sounds like a good fit for you, please let Pastor Melissa know in person, by email or by phone.

## The Naming Project Camp

Are you a part of the LGBTQIA+ community and love being outdoors and at camp? The Naming Project is a camp specifically for youth who are of any sexual orientation, gender identity, or expression who are interested in discussing and understanding sexuality and gender in terms of their own spiritual journey. These youth are also excited to spend time with other teen campers and staff while canoeing, swimming, hiking, singing, doing arts and crafts.

This year, The Naming Project is providing an opportunity for adults to go to camp. Here is your chance to experience the camp you only dreamed about. On June 12-15, you are invited to Bay Lake Camp in Deerwood, Minn., for Christ-centered community that celebrates who you are as a child of God. This is a fundraiser for the ongoing ministry of The Naming Project, benefiting the youth camp, as well as consultation for LGBTQIA+ inclusive youth ministry.

We'll do all the things youth campers do: Bible study, worship, arts and crafts, all camp games and campfire. There's even a Coffee House Cabaret on the last night and we expect you to bring the talent!

For ages 21 and up. For more information and to sign up, go to [www.thenamingproject.org](http://www.thenamingproject.org).



# Generosity



## Fall Generosity Intentions Update

Thank you to all who were able to make a faith promise (pledge) as an act of faith this fall. Our generosity weekend was on November 23-24. As of the writing of this *Centering* article, 258 households have made a financial intention as an act of faith.

It is important to note that we do not budget based on these intentions, rather we see each intention as a faith promise that a household makes between them and God for the coming year. It is fun to celebrate that 258 households made an intention and that total intended amount for the general fund, which empowers ministry and mission, totals \$947,086. There is a story here to celebrate.

In 2015, 274 households were able to make a financial intention, totaling \$755,675. With our shared intentions for 2020 at \$947,086 we can celebrate a significant increase for mission. What a remarkable and positive change in our shared faith promises in five years. Thank you for your love for God and for the work of God's Church.

## Mission Forward Capital Appeal Update

There is good news with the Mission Forward Capital Appeal. The final pledges are in and the total committed is \$1,919,778! Our goal was to reach \$2,000,000, allowing us to nearly retire the debt on the second loan from the Building Renewal Project and to complete a next set of projects. The Central Lutheran Foundation Board of Trustees at their December meeting voted to continue the support of the Foundation for another three years, with a new commitment of \$250,000. So, the grand total for the mission forward appeal is \$2,169,778.

This is great news for the mission we are called to as a congregation. It will allow the congregation to tend to the second loan and now move forward with the renovation of the lower narthex, needed stone work on the historic sanctuary, relighting the bell tower, additional support for the Garden Ministry Team and the landscaping plan, the creation of a kids play area and a benevolence gift to remind us that all these gifts come from the hand of a generous God.

Thank you to each of you for your faithfulness and ongoing support for the mission and ministry of Central Lutheran.

## Annual Open Budget Meeting and Annual Meeting Updates

The annual open budget meeting was held on Sunday, February 2. Thirty-four people were able to attend as Obie Holmen, director of finance, led us through the proposed budget for 2020, a recap of the building renewal fund, an update on the mission forward appeal fund, the designated funds and balance sheet. There was a time for questions and wonderful conversation followed. This annual, open budget meeting is the chance for all to learn about the health of Central's financial life, the challenges we face and the opportunities to continue to move forward with transparency and clarity.

The annual meeting of the congregation was held on Sunday, February 9. Members gathered for lunch and the annual meeting to review and celebrate the ministry and mission of the congregation. The main agenda items were to adopt the balanced 2020 budget and to approve the Nominating Committee recommendations for leadership for 2020. The budget was adopted, and the congregation submitted the ballot, electing the following leaders to two year terms: Lisa Beane, president; Rod Richter, vice-president; Jen Surla, secretary; Roberta Groening, council at-large; Paul Troselius, council at-large; Seth Peter, Audit Committee; Christa Olson, Judith Hedman, Karen Knox, and Brian McKinley, synod assembly voting members. Three new members were elected to the Nominating Committee: Carol Rieger, Kathy Kvammen-McKinley and Thomas Anderson. The congregation also rose to thank David Sand for his Council leadership, Sara Stensaas for her leadership as president, as well as the Nominating Committee members who completed their terms: Joe Surla, Heidi Tysk-Poppe and Kari Colchin.

The congregation also received the financial reports, Strategic Planning Team report, a long term maintenance and capital replacement plan report, an overview of the building renewal finances as that project comes to completion, a report on the Mission Forward Capital Appeal, and reports from leaders, pastors and staff. The annual report is still available at the welcome desk or a digital copy is on our website.

# Music & Worship

By Deacon Mark Sedio

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”



With these words spoken on Ash Wednesday as our heads are marked with ashes in the form of a cross, we remember. We reacquaint ourselves with the hard fact that we all shall die. But also, we re-member ourselves to the community of faith that is the church. We remember that, in baptism, we are united with Christ in a death like his but that we are also united with Christ in a resurrection like his.

For many years I had the good fortune of working with Central member Mons Teig at Luther Seminary. Mons, as you likely know, was professor of worship/liturgy. In class he would remind his students that on Ash Wednesday we are *practicing* our own death. We remember. It is a time of introspection, of understanding who we are as human beings. But Ash Wednesday is only the beginning as we travel the Lenten road with Jesus—hearing again the stories of what it is to be human, culminating in three great days—the Triduum—in which we come to the realization of what this Jesus from Nazareth, Mary’s son, God’s Son has accomplished on our behalf. Death. And life.

Lent also provides us with a time to re-member ourselves to worship. Some form of Lent (preparation for the celebration of Easter) has been around since at least the early part of the third century. (Christmas, on the other hand, is a much more recent addition to the Church calendar.) Music plays a role: in the great hymns of Lent that heighten the spoken message, the choral and organ music that bathe us in our history—both scriptural and denominationally. The songs we sing help us remember who we are and whose we are: “On my heart imprint your image, blessed Jesus, King of grace.”

Additionally, Lent comes with an array of visual reminders and ritual actions. Ashes, cross, the color purple, the stripping of the chancel area on Maundy Thursday.

Art is at the core of liturgy, of worship. Mons Teig also reminded his students that worship is drama. Bringing to life the stories of salvation—a parted sea, a fiery furnace that has no burning power, a dove bearing an olive branch, an empty tomb.

This is why I do what I do. I have at one time or another had the opportunity to fill other roles—recitalist, lecturer, college choral conductor. But it is as a church musician that I find my identity—that I do the thing I love that I feel God has called me to do. The thing YOU have called me to do. And I am exceedingly thankful for this. This Lenten and Easter season, let us be mindful of the ways the gospel is unfolding in our community as we re-member ourselves one to another and remember the old, old story: that God is love, that God became one of us...and knew death as we shall know death. And was raised in three days—three days—Triduum. Our journey together leads us on many paths; for some in our community, these past months have been very, very hard. But we are bound one to another. We are membered, we are re-membered again and again in that cross that marks our foreheads, in saving water, in song, in spirit, and most of all, in life. Thanks be to God!

## Ash Wednesday

February 26

12:00 and 7:00 p.m. worship; 1:00 p.m. soup, bread and salad lunch

## Wednesdays in Lent

12:00 p.m.

Service of Word and Prayer

12:30 p.m.

Light lunch follows service (soup, bread and salad)

1:00-2:00 p.m.

God’s Word in Our Midst Bible Study

6:00-7:00 p.m.

Adult Faith Formation reflection on the Lord’s Prayer through the lens of Martin Luther’s teaching in the Small Catechism.

7:00-7:20 p.m.

Evening prayer

7:30 p.m.

Central Choir Rehearsal

## Worship at Central during Holy Week and Easter

### Passion/Palm Sunday

- April 4 - Holy Communion at 5:00 p.m.; focus on the Palm Sunday story
- April 5 - Holy Communion at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.; procession with palms around the building; The Passion according to Matthew follows

### The Great Three Days

- Maundy Thursday Holy Communion - April 9, 12:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- Good Friday Adoration of the Crucified - April 10, 12:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.
- Great Vigil of Easter Holy Saturday, April 11, 7:00 p.m. (no 5:00 p.m. service)

### Resurrection of Our Lord

Sunday, April 12

- First Light Devotions in the Columbarium at 7:30 a.m.
- Holy Communion at 8:30 and 10:30 a.m.

All services are livestreamed on our website.

# Lifelong Faith Formation

Spring is an exciting season in the formation cluster at Central. At the end of April, seven of our eighth-grade students will claim their faith as their own, saying yes to God's invitation to continue learning and living as God's beloved children. Join us on April 26 when we'll gather to celebrate this beautiful milestone in our students' lives.

Our Sunday school children burst into our gathering room every Sunday with curiosity, wonder and love for their friends. Each week we sing and get to know each other better. We talk about and explore all that the Bible teaches us about the world, our neighbors and ourselves. Our shepherds are a kind and compassionate group of adults who come each week to teach and be present in our kids' lives. Jane comes in to do music with us regularly and the kids love it.

The high school students are preparing for a Civil Rights trip this summer to see how God is at work in creating justice for all. They are learning about places like the 16th Avenue Baptist Church in Birmingham, the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery and the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis—all places we will visit in June. We are excited and grateful for this opportunity to learn and grow.

Open to the Mystery of God has been our Adult Education theme this year and after completing our Lenten learning on The Lord's Prayer, we will spend a few weeks looking at the Mystery of God through the lens of the Psalms. Watch the *Spirit* for Bible study dates and times.

Our Pastoral Care is enriched by pastoral leadership and our Caring Crew. We regularly visit our members and their families when they are in need of care and support. Our Caring Crew visits over 40 members regularly—bringing communion and stories of their lives and friends at church.

Baptisms, weddings and funerals continue to punctuate the rhythm of our lives. It is always a privilege and blessing to accompany individuals and families on their journeys of faith.



## Upcoming for Youth

### March 21

Kindergarten and 1st Grade Faith Stepping Stone

### April 5

Health Kits; 8th Grade Scapulars; High School Peeps Dioramas

### April 25

Confirmation Rehearsal/Dinner

### April 26

Confirmation Sunday

### May 17

Last Day of Sunday School



## Lenten Adult Faith Formation for Sunday and Wednesday

This Lenten season, which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 26, you are invited to center your journey in the Lord's Prayer. Classes will be offered on Sunday and Wednesday for you to spend some intentional time reflecting on the Lord's Prayer through the lens of Martin Luther's teaching in the Small Catechism. It is also the time to return to the Lord's Prayer as central for a life of faith and prayer.

Here is the class schedule for Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings in Lent. Please note that on Wednesday night, the class gathers at 6:00 p.m., and then you are invited to remain for evening prayer in the sanctuary at 7:00 p.m. Evening prayer runs from 7:00-7:20 pm.

The Sunday class and the Wednesday class are somewhat parallel but differ a bit in schedule. If you cannot make one class, you are invited to note when that class is offered on Sunday or Wednesday.

### February

#### 26 – Ash Wednesday

12:00 and 7:00 p.m. worship (soup/salad lunch after 12:00 service)

### March

#### 1 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. – Small Catechism and Lord's Prayer Introduction

#### 4 – Wednesday

6:00 p.m. – Small Catechism and Lord's Prayer Introduction

#### 8 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. – Lord's Prayer Petitions 2, 3 and 4

#### 11 – Wednesday

6:00 p.m. – Lord's Prayer Petitions 2, 3 and 4

#### 15 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. – Austen Hartke, guest speaker for Empowering Conversations weekend: Open to the Mystery of God in Diversity

12:00 p.m. – Empowering Conversations: Austen Hartke - Open to the Mystery of God in Diversity

#### 18 – Wednesday

6:00 p.m. – Lord's Prayer Petition 5

#### 22 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. – Lord's Prayer Petition 5

#### 25 – Wednesday

6:00 p.m. – Lord's Prayer Petition 6 – 7

#### 29 – Sunday

9:30 a.m. – Lord's Prayer Petition 6 – 7

### April

#### 1 – Wednesday

6:00 p.m. – Lord's Prayer and Prayers of the Cosmos

#### 5 – Palm Sunday

9:30 a.m. – Holy Week in Matthew's Gospel

#### 12 – Easter Sunday

9:30 a.m. – No lifelong faith formation class

### Strategic Plan Update

The Strategic Planning Team is hard at work defining the first SMART goals to empower the ministry and mission of the congregation. The planning team has divided into four, key work groups. Lisa Beane, the chair of the Strategic Planning Team and Council president has written a wonderful summary that is included in the annual report. Please take a look at that summary to learn more about all of the work that is in process.

One of the work groups has arrived at their first, key goal for our life together and has an invitation for you to consider.

### Great Room Welcome Team Invite

Information Meeting, Sunday, March 1, 11:45 a.m.

You are invited to consider being a great room "welcomer" to help identify and welcome visitors here at Central Lutheran. The Strategic Planning Team has a work group seeking to provide a more intentional way to connect with and welcome visitors after each worship service. This team invites you to prayerfully consider if you can help with this work.

To learn more about this, and to see if this is a fit for you, there will be an information meeting offered on Sunday, March 1, at 11:45 a.m. If you worship at 5:00 p.m. on Saturday or 8:30 a.m. on Sunday and are interested, but cannot attend the meeting, please talk to Pastor Peter after worship and he will connect you with this work. You can also talk to one of the members of this Strategic Planning Team work group: Judith Hedman, Karl Starr or Kathy Fiscus.





Central Lutheran  
MINNEAPOLIS

CENTRAL LUTHERAN  
333 South 12th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55404

Presorted  
First-Class Mail  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
Twin Cities, MN  
Permit No. 3197

## 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

The cover art is an icon created by Russian painter Andrei Rublev in the 15th century titled "The Trinity" or "The Hospitality of Abraham." It shows the three visitors to Abraham in Genesis 18. Over the years it has been interpreted to be understood as the three persons of the Trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. It's a reminder to us that even God in Godself is in community. Some scholars wonder if in the very middle front of the icon there was a mirror affixed so that the observer is the fourth person at the table and in community with the Trinity.



## Exploring the promise of God for all



Central Lutheran  
MINNEAPOLIS

CENTRAL LUTHERAN  
333 South 12th Street  
Minneapolis, MN 55404  
612-870-4416  
[centralmpls.org](http://centralmpls.org)

'CENTERING'  
A quarterly publication of Central Lutheran. Questions or comments may be directed to the editor, Sara Masters at [smasters@centralmpls.org](mailto:smasters@centralmpls.org)

Member of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | [www.elca.org](http://www.elca.org)  
and Align Minneapolis | [www.alignmpls.org](http://www.alignmpls.org)