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Georgia Grahn, Thomas Paleen, Lauryn Pohlman, and Claire Shirilla affirm their baptisms this Sunday, April 28, 2024 at the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Join the students and their families as they celebrate this remarkable milestone in their lives of faith. Read their Statements of Faith below.

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### Georgia Grahn

I am Georgia Grahn, but my full name is Georgia Grace Grahn. I was born on March 4th, 2010, at Abbott Northwestern in Minneapolis. I was baptized at Red Hill Lutheran Church in Tustin, CA. My dad was baptized there when he was a baby, and my parents were married there as well. My godparents are Molly and Jeff Johnson. I am the middle child and my older sister's name is Madeline. She is 5 years older than me. My younger sister is Clementine, and she is 2 years younger than me. My parents' names are Sarah and Matthew. I am an 8th grader at Anthony Middle School in Minneapolis. Things I enjoy doing in my free time include swimming, watching movies and shows, and going shopping. I would like to thank my family for supporting me in every small and big decision I make. I owe everything to my parents, especially because not once have they ever made me feel less like myself and stopped me from the person I want to be.



My faith in Christ has always been there. Ever since I was little, it was an expectation that every Sunday we were at church and that hasn't changed. I have always believed in God because I grew up in a household where everyone did. My favorite story in the Bible is about a girl named Esther who is asked a favor of a king and in the end she is faced with a problem that she was very afraid to solve, but in the end she put her faith in God and when she did everything worked out. This story is important to me because sometimes

when I am faced with a challenge that I am scared about, I have to remember that no matter what it is, God is going to be there every step of the way and sometimes the only thing you can do is put your trust in God.

Over the years my faith has changed because my relationship with him changed. When I was little, God was just an unknown person that I heard about at church. Over time and as I grew up, I started believing in him more and more, soon enough I knew that the only way to live was through God, and that without him I would not be the person I am today. My perception of God is the same way that he is written about in the Bible in many stories. To me God is like a shepherd, and we are his sheep. Without a shepherd the sheep become lost, confused and hurt. Sometimes the shepherd has to do what is best for the sheep and the sheep don't realize what is best for them. The shepherd is the sheep's protector and caretaker. Behind every choice, challenge, and problem is God's plan which is better than any person can decide for themselves.

My plan is to stay connected to God and Central in every way I can. This includes volunteer work, helping in the kitchen, or in the nursery. I plan on continuing to come to Central Lutheran for as long as I can, so I and many others can continue to learn and better ourselves through Christ. I want to learn from God how living through Him is the best thing I can do for myself. I thank God for everything that he has brought me.



### Thomas Paleen

My name is Thomas Paleen. I was baptized at Central Lutheran Church, and I've been going there for my whole life. I am an eighth grader at Minnetonka Middle School West. I like to play tennis with my team at school and do taekwondo. I like to spend time with my family and play tennis with my friends.



God is really important to me. He is always there when it's hard, but also when it's going well. Something I love about Central Lutheran is everyone there. Every time I go to church, I am excited to see everybody and talk with them. I think that going to Central Lutheran has helped me meet new people, and I think that's important.

Looking forward, I want to stay active in Central Lutheran. I think that I will volunteer in the nursery to help the little kids. I also will try to come to church every Sunday to stay connected. I also will volunteer in my community more, trying to help people who need it.



### Lauryn Pohlman

My name is Lauryn Pohlman. I was born in a hospital in St. Cloud to my mom Jaci Growney. I was adopted into the Pohlman family when I was a newborn. I was baptized at Christ English Lutheran in North Minneapolis. We called it the little church. My family was there, and my Godparents are Rachel and Michael Moeller. My family is my mom and dad and sibling, Myles, and my two dogs. I go to St. Louis Park Middle School. I like basketball and to draw and listen to music. I want to thank my mom for helping me and being my mom. I want to thank my dad for always being here for me. I thank KK for being the most real friend.



My favorite story in the Bible is about Moses. I really like the movie, The Prince of Egypt. I love everything about the movie. I would watch it over and over when I was younger, and we always watched it at family camp and that was a lot of fun. I also like the story about Zacchaeus because he's a short guy and it was interesting because nobody liked him, but Jesus still went up to him and talked to him. Jesus even asked to eat supper at his house. I love that my mom works at Central, and I get to see her when she works. The building is so pretty, and I really like all the older people who go there. I like that I get to see my friends at church like Tyra and Dwayne. God is important to me because I believe God has been watching out for me even before I was born. God protected me so that I was born, and God blessed me with my family.

I used to think it was dumb to believe in God, but now that I'm older I have a new perspective. Now I think that God is a reliable source of blessing in my life. God is the reason I am alive. I believe God is pretty chill, but if you try to be too slick with God you will learn a lesson. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are just God in another version. I like that Jesus always gives everyone a chance. He doesn't just listen to rumors, but he comes and meets people for themselves. When I was little, I decided the Holy Spirit's name was Monte. I especially liked the stories when the Holy Spirit took the form of a dove and hovered over Jesus while he was getting baptized.

This summer I would like to come to Central on Mondays and help serve the community meal. If I have any questions about church, I just ask my mom. I would like to better understand communion. I hope to learn more about my faith this summer as I travel with the other Central youth to New Orleans for the National Youth Gathering.



### Claire Shirilla

My name is Claire Carolyn Shirilla. I was born in St Paul at St. Joseph's Hospital. I am an 8th grader at Hidden River Middle School in St. Paul. I live with my parents (Paul and Amy), my sister (Elizabeth), and my dog (Rex), and bunny (LilyMae). We have been members at Central since 2021.



I was baptized at Immanuel Lutheran Church with my two Godfathers (Uncle Jon Shirilla and Uncle Mike Shirilla), my grandparents (Jim and Laura Shirilla and Les and Carolyn Svendsen), and my Uncle Jon Svendsen. I play volleyball on my middle school team and my club team, M1. I also like downhill skiing with my family and friends. I'd like to thank my entire family for their support, but especially my Grandpa Les who helped me with a lot of my confirmation.

I enjoy going to Central because of the beautiful building and the friendly people. Attending service makes me feel closer to God and my family. My favorite Bible story is the Parable of the Prodigal Son because I like that it sends the message of how God will always love and forgive you. God is important in my life because he helps me get through times when I am uncertain and brings me close to my family and the community of the church.

After I am confirmed, I look forward to going to the high school retreats and continuing to be a part of Central. I'd also like to find more ways to volunteer and give back to those in need. As I go on in life, I would like to pass on the faith that the Bible and God gives me at Central.





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An Everyday Church for Everyone

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